Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998 ISSUE #66
VOLUME XI, NO. 6 $4.95 USA

ISBN 0-7869-0798-3
50495
9 780786 907984

Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998
ISSUE #66

Cover

Stephen Daniele shows us what's lurking in the water near Immurk's Hold in "Operation Manta Ray."

"The human creature is imaginative. If he sees a tail disappearing over a fence, he imagines the whole beast and usually imagines the wrong beast...Whenever we take a trip into the realms of fancy, we see a good many things that never were."
— Thomas Brackett Reed

6 LETTERS

7 EDITORIAL

8 ENORMOUSLY INCONVENIENT
by Kent Ertman
(AD&D® Adventure, character levels 2–3; 12 total levels). A careless mage has accidentally created a very large problem.

16 AVENGING MURIK
by Christopher Perkins
(AD&D SideTrek Adventure, character levels 4–6; 18 total levels). Nothing's more dangerous than a vengeful dwarf except, perhaps, a greedy one.

18 THE SUNKEN SHADOW
by James Wyatt
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 1–3; 8 total levels). The sea has many perils. Are the treasures of a sunken pirate ship worth the risk?

36 SWING SHOT!
by Chris Doyle
(AD&D SideTrek Adventure, character levels 4–6; 20 total levels). A rickety rope bridge is the least of your problems.

38 OPERATION MANTA RAY
by Paul Culotta
(AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventure, character levels 6–9; 40 total levels). Immurk's Hold is home to thousands of pirates—and one Sembian spy.

58 THE PETRIFYING PRIESTESS
by Brian Corvello
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 5–7; 30 total levels). The Eyes of Death are upon you!

66 ORANGE AND BLACK
by Peter C. Spahn
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 1–3; 12 total levels). Cursed is the beast that stalks the Black Forest.

ENORMOUSLY INCONVENIENT

BY KENT ERTMAN

Bigger isn't always better

Artwork by Valerie Vallese
Cartography by Diesel

Kent writes: "I want to say a special thanks to my good friend Richard Innes, who saves me from the verbal diarrhea I inevitably fall into when I'm writing. I first submitted this story two years ago, and if it hadn't been for Richard, I'd still be re-writing the thing."

"Enormously Inconvenient" is a generic AD&D® adventure for a party of five characters of levels 2–3 (about 12 total levels). There must be a good mix of classes with at least one skilled fighter. There are many difficult battles, and the party must learn to fight as a unit to be successful.

The adventure can take place in an existing campaign and is not restricted to a specific location. The story begins far away from any cities or organized communities, on a solitary road in the wilderness. Nobody hires the PCs; they are swept into the adventure by circumstance.

Beginning the Adventure

When the story begins, the PCs are traveling along a well-known yet isolated road that follows the edge of a thick forest. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The day is bright and sunny, and the air pleasantly warm as you travel to your destination. The road is smooth, and you should make excellent traveling time. To the south are vast grassy plains that stretch as far as the eye can see. To the north, just at the edge of the road, is a tall and imposing forest.
>
> Just ahead is a great stone bridge over a swiftly moving river. As you cross, you can see where it crashes into another river in a turbulent meeting. The roaring of the water fades behind as you keep traveling.
>
> A sudden flicker of movement from the trees catches your eye. The forest floor, thick with murky shadows, ripples with indistinct movement, almost as if it were alive. An almost gentle clicking noise fills the air. Abruptly, a swarm of huge red ants erupts out of the foliage and onto the road in a frenzied wave. It takes only an instant for them to reorganize and resume their inevitable path toward you. The sunlight gleams wickedly off slick mandibles.

The PCs can either fight or retreat. The ants pursue the PCs wherever they

run, but they do not cross any body of water (such as the nearby river).

Giant worker ants (23): AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 2; hp 8 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA poison; SZ S (2' long); ML 9; XP 35; *MM*/204.

The red ants secrete a disorienting poison with their bite. Any PC who is bitten and fails a save vs. poison fights at –1 to hit for the next five rounds. The effects are cumulative to a maximum of –4 to hit.

The ants are simply searching for food and are not terribly committed to the battle. If more than half of them are killed, the rest scatter and retreat into the forest. If the PCs are victorious, read or paraphrase the following:

> The last of the ants head toward the forest, and the maddening clicking noise finally subsides. Before you find a moment to rest, a terrible shriek of pain bursts from deeper in the forest, and then there is an ominous silence.

For the DM

About two weeks ago, an absent-minded mage was soaring over this area on his *flying carpet*, transporting a variety of magical items. Just as he was crossing the mountains, he ran into some turbulence, and a *beaker of plentiful potions* tumbled from his grasp and dropped into the mountain range. The mage gave the *beaker* up for lost and continued on his journey.

The *beaker* did survive the fall, but it landed at the source of the Silver River and shattered into six pieces. The moment it was submerged, the *potions* discharged into the water and created a volatile and powerful mix that contaminated the entire waterway. The magical effects are being felt all the way from the source to the point where the Silver River empties into the River Jaspyre, which is right where the PCs crossed the bridge. The flow of the River Jaspyre is enough to dilute the magic to the point that it is undetectable. Strangely, the magical waters affect only certain wild animals (not humans or domestic animals), enlarging them to many times their natural size.

All of these changes were profoundly disturbing to the forest's protector, the dryad Karynne. The enlarged animals were destroying normal-sized ones, herbivores were decimating the plant population, and some formerly passive animals became uncontrollably aggressive. There is a pool behind Karynne's tree that works as a *crystal ball* at her command, and she used it to determine the cause of the strange transformation.

Just as she was about to take action, a swarm of giant ants invaded her clearing and started building a new anthill. To make room for their new home, they immediately began chewing away the underbrush, including Karynne's tree. Since a dryad's life force is stored within her tree, Karynne has been fighting a life-and-death battle with the unthinking swarm, trying to keep them from destroying the vessel for her soul.

Karynne was losing badly. Fortunately for her, the PCs provided enough of a distraction to win her some time ... but not much. The scream the PCs heard at the end of their battle was Karynne crying out in pain. She will die if the PCs don't rush to her aid.

The Forest

1. The Anthill. If the PCs travel any distance into the forest, they find the anthill automatically. Because of the size of this clearing, it is almost impossible to miss this encounter.

If the PCs take a long time getting here, or if they ignore the scream and come back later, Karynne is dead, and her remains become ant food. The DM should adjust the descriptions appropriately. It is still possible for the PCs to complete the adventure if this happens, though it is substantially more difficult, since the players will not even know their goal.

> The smell of sap and crushed leaves clouds your senses. You are in a clearing with a huge mound of black dirt in the center. Giant ants crawl in and out of a honeycomb of holes at the base of the hill.
>
> Abruptly, another scream tears through the air. Standing with her back to the trunk of a huge oak tree is a shapely woman bathed in bright blood, her hair matted and coated with dirt. A dozen giant ants surround her, snipping and lunging from all directions. The noble tree stands alone in the clearing. Other worker ants are busily clearing more of the underbrush.
>
> The woman gives a final scream as the irresistible crush of the insects overwhelms her. They swarm over her body and she collapses, still struggling.

The lonely oak is Karynne's tree, and unless the PCs move quickly, she dies defending it

Giant worker ants (15): Statistics appear in "Beginning the Adventure" section.

Check morale for the ants every time one of them is killed. Once the battle is resolved, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Stiff red exoskeletons crunch underfoot as you move to the body of the injured woman. Despite numerous wounds on her legs, she is still moving. With agonizing slowness, she drags herself toward the tree, sobbing with every movement.
>
> Finally her energy reserves are depleted. She collapses, yet she still strains weakly to touch the bark of the noble oak. Her fingers are mere inches away.

Without help from the PCs, Karynne dies within moments. If the PCs use any kind of natural or magical healing, it gives Karynne enough strength to reach her oak. If the PCs help her touch the tree trunk, the end result is the same:

> Her finger gracefully brushes the rough bark of the great oak, and instantly the pained expression on her face fades. "Please," she gasps, "help my forest."
>
> She closes her eyes and lets out a deep sigh like the breeze rustling through pine branches. You look and see that her hand has slipped into the tree itself! Her body flows like liquid as she melts into the tree trunk. "The source," she whispers. "Follow the river to its source ... restore the balance ..."
>
> And then she is gone. Were it not for the tiny, bloody hand print at the base of the trunk, you might not even believe she had ever existed.

For the moment, at least, the ants have lost interest in chewing down Karynne's oak.

The PCs are not safe in this clearing. Every round, there is a 20% cumulative chance that a single worker ant finds them and attacks immediately. Once combat begins, every round 1d4–1 workers join the battle. The numbers grow until either the PCs are dead, the ants have all been wiped out, or the PCs retreat. There are a total of 142 ants in this hill, plus a queen in her

Tiptoe Through the Forest

Roll randomly or choose from the following list every hour the party is in Karynne's forest.

Roll 1d10	
1–2	Dead bear
3–5	Worker ants
6	Giant weasels
7–10	Role reversal

Dead bear: PCs find the decaying, partially eaten body of a bear. It was killed either by the weasels or the giant ants. It is too rotten to eat.

Worker ants (2–5): These ants are foraging for food and must make a Morale check every time one is killed. Statistics appear on page 9.

Giant weasels (2): AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 18, 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12; SA blood drain; SZ M (7' long); ML 10; XP 175; New Monster

These new predators are enjoying their promotion up the food chain. They stalk the PCs from the moment they move north from the anthill and attack either when the encounter is rolled normally, one hour after nightfall, or just as the PCs are about to leave the forest (whichever comes first). The weasels are absolutely ruthless and fight to the death. They have no treasure, though their pelts could be sold for 500 to 1,000 gp. Once the PCs have encountered the weasels and dealt with them, replace this with a dead bear encounter.

Role Reversal: Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Suddenly, off in the distance you hear a tremendous crashing in the underbrush, followed immediately by the yelping of a dog. The terrified "Yipe yipe yipe!" of the animal moves swiftly closer as it runs toward you—and it sounds like something big is running after it.
>
> Abruptly a frantic and bedraggled wolf bursts out of the trees in front of you. It spares you barely a moment's notice as it streaks past and disappears into the underbrush, yowling all the way. Just as suddenly, an enormous white creature explodes through the foliage amid an eruption of leaves.
>
> The ogre-sized rabbit glares at you menacingly, hissing loudly through its tremendous teeth, and then bounds after the wolf in a blinding streak.

This sudden display of nature-gone-bonkers is intended purely for comic relief. If the encounter is rolled a second time, replace it with the dead bear.

chamber deep beneath the ground. Eliminating the anthill would be a monumental undertaking.

Karynne has merged with her tree to heal, and the PCs do not hear from her again until much later. There is nothing else of interest in the clearing.

2. Karynne's Forest. Oaks are plentiful here, along with willow, maple, and poplar trees. Travel through the forest is easy, as there are numerous paths through the undergrowth. A group of bears once dominated the area, though they have all been killed by the enormous animals that were once their prey.

Every hour the party is in the forest they encounter something. See the sidebar "Tiptoe Through the Forest."

3. The Swamp. In this area of the forest, the ground turns to soft muskeg, and puddles of water collect on the ground. There are still well-defined trails through the trees, but the footing is far from certain, and movement is at half normal speed. The air is choked with mosquitoes and black flies (normal sized) who bite at any exposed skin they can find. After two hours, the itching is so unbearable that it imposes a +2 penalty on the PCs' armor class for the rest of the day. Marsh gas hangs heavy in the air and, while not dangerous, is utterly revolting.

Anyone who wanders into the swamp is at risk from the giant frogs that call the area home. There is a cumulative 20% chance every hour the PCs spend exploring the swamp that they stumble into the frogs' lair. They remain hidden in the undergrowth for four rounds, croaking loudly before they attack. The croaking alerts the PCs, so they are not surprised.

Giant frogs (7): AL N; AC 7; MV 3, swim 9; HD 3; hp 24, 22, 16 (×3), 15, 12; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA tongue and swallow; SZ M (5' long); ML 8; XP 270; *MM*/119.

Giant frogs are afraid of fire and flee from an impressive display of it. Because of the presence of the marsh gas, any fire-based spell or attack causes maximum damage. Clever PCs who intentionally use fire to their advantage deserve a reward of 50 XP. A fire-based attack also sets fire to the frogs' lair, and the blaze destroys everything inside.

The frog's lair is inside the hull of a wooden boat so old and rotten that it sags under its own weight. Inside, largely covered by heaps of dung, is a wooden chest filled with rotten clothing. Underneath is an iron brooch without a flake of rust, which acts as a *ring of feather falling* when worn.

4. The Silver River. The river is wide at all points downstream of the lake, so it is difficult to cross. The current is not fast, but the bottom drops away quickly to over 25' at the center. Crossing takes 5–7 rounds of uninterrupted swimming for lightly encumbered PCs, and those in metal armor can't even make an attempt without sinking immediately. The current pulls swimmers at least 100' downstream over the course of the crossing.

A giant crocodile claims ownership of this piece of the Silver River. It is highly aggressive and attacks anything that enters the water. There is also a 20% chance that it attacks anyone on the edges of the swamp nearest the river.

Giant crocodile: AL N; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 7; hp 24 (normally 45); #AT 2; Dmg 3–18/2–20; SD surprise (–2 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SZ H (25' long); ML 11; SZ 975; *MM*/49.

The crocodile has large bite wounds on its left side, the result of an extended battle with a giant turtle. On the eastern riverbank, just before the river emerges from the forest, is a thoroughly gnawed giant turtle shell, the former occupant long since eaten by the crocodile.

5. The Plains. Between Karynne's Forest and the foothills is a narrow span of open plain that stretches east to the lake and west to the Mountains of the Golems.

The ground is strangely uneven; rangers or druids automatically notice that the huge uneven areas are actually gigantic buffalo footprints almost 5' long. Other characters may notice the same thing if they examine the ground and roll their Intelligence or more on a 2d20.

When the PCs first emerge from the forest onto the plains, read or paraphrase the following:

The thick tree branches finally give way to a narrow, open plain of grass and a spectacular view of the area beyond. Past the swaying grasses ahead are gently rolling foothills that sprawl northward to a wall of spiny mountains. They burst upward to the sky—an imposing barrier to the lands beyond. The very tops are slathered with white sheets of ice.

You can see the Silver River is fed from a lake that dominates the eastern landscape and extends all the way north to the mountains. The lake, in turn, is fed by an aimlessly meandering river that charges swiftly out of the mountain range. The source must be buried deep inside the mountains.

There are seven enormous buffalo grazing in the shade of the Mountains of the Golems. From this distance, the gigantic creatures look like hills. If the PCs noticed the giant hoof prints, each PC can make an Intelligence check on 4d6 to notice the herd.

Gigantic buffalo (7): AL N; AC 2; MV 24; HD 15; hp 80 each; THAC0 n/a; #AT n/a; Dmg n/a; SA stampede; SD head is AC –2; SZ G (50' at shoulder); ML n/a; New Monster.

After 10 rounds, a sudden rock slide in the mountains spooks the herd, and they stampede eastward across the plains. Read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a distant rumbling. It grows louder, and you feel the ground shaking. The noise swells rapidly to an ear-splitting roar, and the earth rocks and buckles beneath you. It takes all your concentration just to stand. You turn your head just in time to see a half dozen gargantuan buffalo thundering toward you at an incredible rate.

If the stampede catches the PCs by surprise, they may be in grave danger. Any PC still on the plain when the herd goes rushing by may be crushed to death.

A far safer course of action is to run for cover, which may be the forest or the hills depending on what the PCs did for the 10 rounds before the stampede. At normal speed, it takes 20 rounds to cross the open plains, so the PCs could find themselves smack in the middle when the stampede starts. Human-sized characters can run across the entire plain in 10 rounds (or halfway in 5 rounds), while dwarves and halflings should take twice as long. If the PCs noticed the herd before attempting to cross the plain, it buys them an extra two rounds. Exactly how long it takes the herd to reach the PCs depends on their location:

- East of the Silver River; four rounds.
- Just west of the Silver River; three rounds.
- Halfway between the river and the left edge of the map; two rounds.
- At the left edge of the map; one round.

Every PC must make a Dexterity check on 1d20 for each buffalo that runs by to avoid the pounding hooves. For each failed check, the player sustains 10 hp crushing damage (save vs. petrification for half damage).

If the PCs are creative, they can scare the buffalo into veering off or running in the opposite direction. Spells like *affect normal fires, color spray, light, phantasmal force, continual light, spook, pyrotechnics,* and others could work if properly used. A *grease* spell cast at the right time would also stop a buffalo or two, but it could be utterly deadly if cast too close. (Imagine a 50'-tall buffalo sliding into you.)

There are countless creative ways the PCs could get themselves out of this situation. The DM should be fair yet realistic in judging how successful they are. If not forced in another direction, the herd thunders across the narrow sliver of flat ground, right through the river. They won't stop until they are completely out of sight.

6. Evil Crawling Through the Grass. The southern foothills is the only normal ecosystem left around the Silver River. The animals that populate the area are all strangely unaffected by the magical waters. Every hour, the PCs encounter something from the following table.

Roll 1d6	
1	1 fox
2	1–2 squirrels
3	1–3 deer
4	2–12 sparrows
5	1–4 gophers
6	snake pit

On the snake pit encounter, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Travel through these hills is mercifully uneventful. The forest creatures appear normal-sized for a change, and it is a pleasant relief. You enter an area where the ground is dry and rocky with lumps of dark stone everywhere.

Suddenly, there is a rapid clicking sound from behind you. No ... not clicking ... rattling. Those odd lumps around you aren't rocks at all; they are rattlesnakes!

This warm rocky space is home to twenty-seven nervous rattlers.

Normal poisonous snakes (27): AL N; AC 6; MV 16; HD 2+1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison, save at +1 or suffer 2–8 hp damage (onset 2–12 rounds); SZ S (4'–5' long), ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

This is a very delicate situation. If any PC makes a sudden movement or gets within 3' of a rattler, there is a 50% chance a snake strikes.

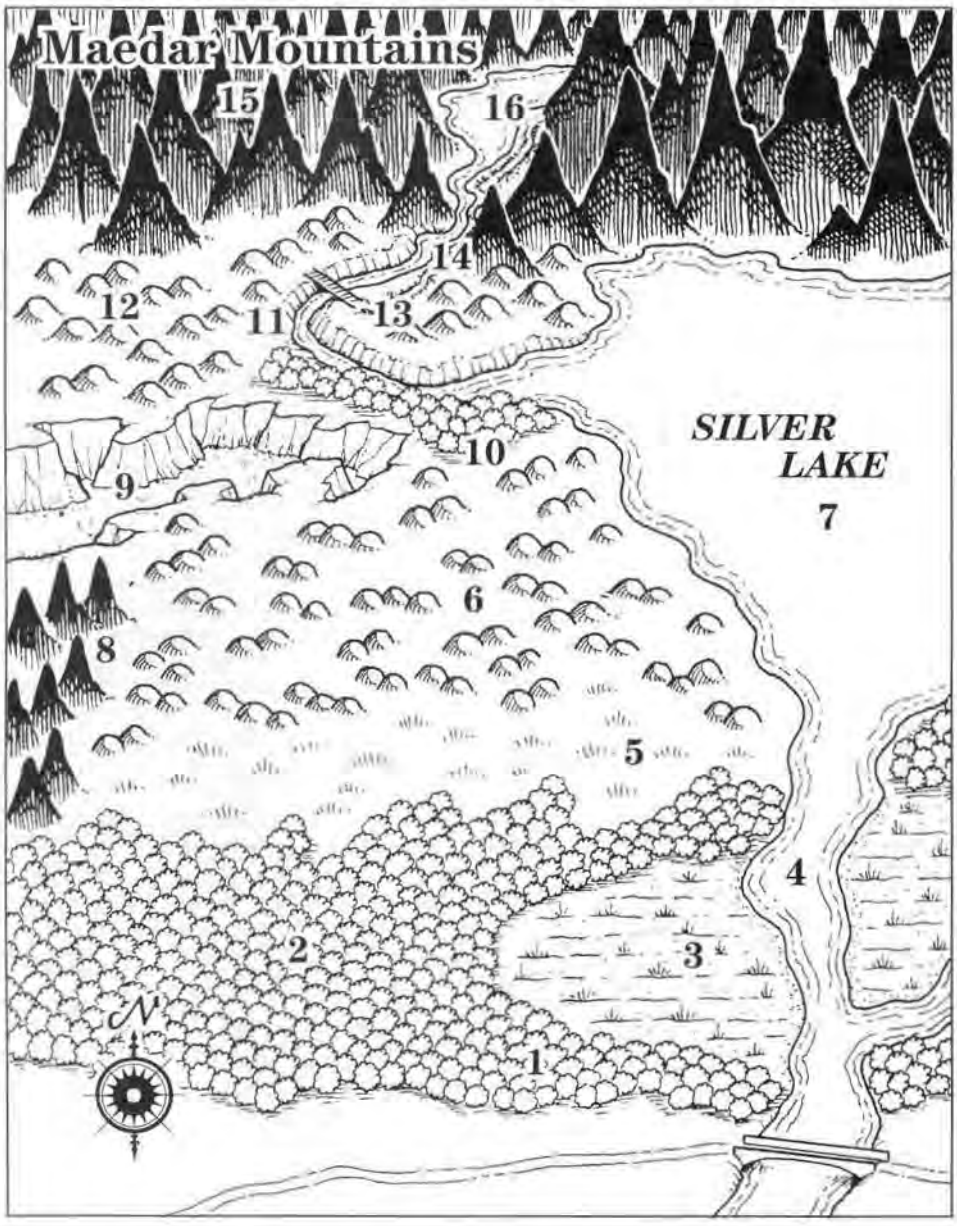
There is a chain reaction here just waiting to happen: if a PC is bitten by a snake, he instinctively reacts with a sudden movement, putting him at risk for more snake bites. Attacking a snake is considered a very sudden movement, so every round of battle there is a 50% chance another snake joins the fray by attacking from behind with a –3 penalty to the PCs' surprise rolls.

Because of the number of snakes, there is a base 20% chance to sneak out of the snake pit and never get within 3' of a rattler. This chance is modified as follows:

+2% for each point of Dexterity;
–10% for each PC moving as a group;
+10% if moving at less than one tenth normal speed;
–10% if moving at normal speed;
–20% if moving at greater than normal speed;
+20% chance if the PC is a thief;
+5% for each snake killed;
+20% if the PC waves a lit torch to clear a path.

The snake pit encounter happens once, after which a roll of 6 on the table is treated as "no encounter."

7. The Silver Lake. The lake is beautiful and calm and is filled with crystal clear water. The shores are steep and rocky, dropping away rapidly to a final depth of over 200 feet at the center. The inhabitants of the water are harmless but immense trout, averaging 10' long and weighing 350 lbs.



If the PCs go fishing, they are in for a tremendous challenge; if successful, their catch is of record-breaking size!

8. The Mountains of the Golems. These mountains aren't much more than foothills, but they are rocky and completely bare of vegetation. The name comes from a pair of mysterious statues of unknown origin that stand on the plains facing east as if standing guard.

> Two great stone statues stare past you expressionlessly. Both are warriors, one male and one female, each holding a long sword against the ground with the left hand. The detail of the statues is incredible, and they appear remarkably well preserved.

Despite appearances, the statues are not petrified beings, and despite the name of the mountains, they are not golems. They are merely very well made with strong, preservative magics.

Because of the lack of water and vegetation, nothing lives in the mountains.

9. The Maw. This canyon is a significant barrier for the PCs traveling north. The only non-magical way to cross it is to climb down one side to the bottom, then climb back up the other. There are plentiful handholds, so thieves and properly-equipped climbers can make the 150' climb automatically. Non-proficient PCs attempting the climb have a base 60% chance for success modified as follows:

+10% for each proficient PC or thief in the party;
–20% if climbing down;
+15% if using ropes, spikes, and other equipment;
–10% if wearing metal armor.

Anyone who fails a check plummets to the bottom, bouncing off the sides of the canyon all the way down. If all goes well, it could still take over six hours to cross the canyon.

10. Lair of the Giant Beaver. Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs after they have spent some time traveling through this stretch of forest:

> This forest is not nearly as pretty as the one to the south. The ground is hard and dry, the trees are gnarled and twisted, and the only undergrowth hardy enough to survive is an ugly, spiny plant. Heaps of moist, rotting leaves carpet the ground, bathing the area in a thick almost palpable stench. To add to the nauseating smell, the wood is teeming with rats.
>
> There is a lot of space between the trees, so you have a good view through the forest. To the north you can see the lake, and to the west a huge canyon cuts into the trees, leaving only a narrow access to the western half of the woods.
>
> However, something else grabs your attention. Directly in front of you is the stump of a huge tree that looks as if it was recently felled ... by being chewed. As you look around, you notice that most of the trees have been cut this way.

This stand of trees is home to a gigantic beaver, and he has been busily chewing through the forest to build a new dam. The beaver is far more aggressive than normal. He attacks just as the PCs are walking through the narrowest area between the maw and the Silver Lake.

Giant beaver: AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 35, THAC0 15; #AT 3, Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12; SA tail slap for 1–8 hp dmg; SZ L (8' long); ML 12 (see below); XP 420; *MM*/244 (beaver, modified).

The beaver has a special tail attack. If it is aware of any creature standing behind it, it makes a vicious slap with its tail at a –2 penalty to hit. It attacks prey on sight and fights to the death.

The beaver's unforgiving ferocity can be exploited. The creature can be tricked into compromising situations if the party is clever, even so far as hurling itself into the maw. If a PC stands directly in front of the crevasse taunting the animal (with a spell or some other means), it charges to attack. If the PC waits until the last minute and then jumps away, the beaver goes flying over the edge to its death. The animal is aggressive and stupid, so it should fall for any reasonable trick the PCs attempt.

The beaver's lair is at the edge of the water, just where the lake begins to widen. It is a huge dam of logs with an inner chamber that can be entered only by swimming under water (treat the entrance as a secret door). Scattered about are various bits of wood and bones, and a thick silver bracelet with gold engravings (worth 500 gp). Also buried with the bones is a scroll tube with two clerical spells, *cure critical wounds* and *neutralize poison*.

11. The Chute.

> You are looking at a narrow ribbon of river that enthusiastically surges into the Silver Lake. The banks are high above the level of the water. It appears difficult to cross, but you can see a suspension bridge at the westernmost point in its progress.

This river is rapid and extremely aggressive. Over the decades, it has eroded a substantial groove through the ground, and now the river lies at the bottom of a sheer 50' canyon. There are no banks on this waterway, just a fast-moving river bracketed by cliffs.

While not particularly wide or deep, the water moves so fast that crossing would be suicide. This assumes that the PCs can even access the river. Anyone, even a proficient swimmer, who insists on jumping in is immediately overpowered by the current and swept underwater. Depending on where he fell/jumped in, a PC spends 4d6+1 rounds submerged before washing into the Silver Lake. (See the *PHB* for rules about drowning.)

If the PCs can devise some means of crossing the river, they are still open to attack from the giant owl (see area **14** below). Depending on their methods, the PCs could be in substantial danger.

12. Payback Time.

> Emerging from the forest, you now have a much better view of the mountains. The river is a significant barrier to any progress eastward, but you can see a suspension bridge which crosses the canyon. Just as you are about to carry on your journey, you here someone calling for help.

If the PCs go looking for the source, they find a huge raccoon with its nose stuffed into a tiny hole in the side of a hill. It is scratching and digging at the sides of the hole with its paws, evidently trying to force its way further in. The cries are coming from inside the hole.

Giant raccoon: AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1, Dmg 2–8; SZ L (9' long); ML 2; XP 175; *MM*/244 (raccoon, modified).

For gaming purposes, the raccoon is completely engrossed in its current task, so if the PCs stay out of sight (behind a hill for example), it may not even notice them. Of course, attacks or loud noises draw its immediate attention.

Any PC surveying the scene who rolls his Wisdom or better on 4d6 notices a trap wrapped around the edge of the raccoon's right rear paw. While it has drawn blood, the trap isn't nearly big enough to cause much damage.

If there is a ranger in the party, he can use his skills to convince the animal to leave willingly. Other characters with animal proficiencies might be able to convince the raccoon also, though at a –2 penalty to the appropriate roll. The PCs may, of course, drive the animal away with brute force. The raccoon is not terribly brave and flees the moment it is wounded.

Once the PCs have removed the mammal, read or paraphrase the following:

> A portly dark-haired man wearing furs wriggles out of the hole in the hill the moment the raccoon is gone. He falls to the ground with a "whump" and struggles to get up. "Thank the heavens!" he barks. "I thought for certain the vermin had me!" He pulls himself to his feet, brushes himself off, and puts on his hat ... a raccoon-skin cap.

This is Thomas, a zero-level human who once made his living catching raccoons. However, the raccoons have had something different to say about the matter, and for the past two weeks the enraged animals have been hunting him. He is now desperately disassembling his trap line, before any more of the gigantic raccoons can stumble into them and develop a grudge. Once this is done, he plans to leave the forest forever; recent events have inspired a sudden career change.

Thomas has lived in these woods all his life and has strong suspicions about the cause of these unnatural growth spurts. If asked, he suggests that the water source must be contaminated; he has noticed that the mutant animals are ones that lair near the river. He can also direct the PCs to the source of the river, though he does not travel with them. He wants to remove his traps and leave the area as quickly as possible.

To show his gratitude, Thomas gives the PCs a pouch of his bear repellent powder. Throwing a handful of the powder into the face of any hostile mammal has an 85% of so irritating the animal that it runs away as if it failed a morale check. There are four handfuls in the pouch.

13. Aerial Assault. Crossing the chasm at this point is a sturdy suspension bridge made of rope and wooden planks. It is solidly built and can withstand the party's full weight without incident, though it sways and bucks as they move across. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs move across the bridge:

> The moment you set foot on the bridge, it bounces and rocks enough to make your stomach churn. Walking on it, the fevered pitching makes you feel downright nauseous. Before you are even a third of the way across, a gigantic owl appears, its wingspan easily twenty feet. It calmly lands on the bridge, sending a massive shock wave that nearly sends you bailing over the edge and into the river. It sits unmoving between you and the opposite side.

Giant owl: AL N; AC 6; MV 3, fly 18 (E); HD 4; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 2–8/2–8/2–5; SA surprise; SZ M (20' wingspan); ML 12; XP 270; *MM*/27 (owl, modified).

The owl is driven primarily by hunger, not aggression. If the PCs can offer it a meal (like a few rats from the forest) it happily makes off with its catch and leaves the PCs alone. All the PCs must do is throw their offering into the air, and the owl, if interested, catches it in its beak. There is only a 35% chance that other meat interests it; it does not accept iron rations.

If the PCs try to force their way past it, the owl attacks. Combat on the bridge should be an exciting experience, as it heaves and sways with the wild movements of fighting. All melee attacks are at –3 to hit, and missile attacks are impossible unless the PCs remain perfectly still for a full round until the bridge stops shaking. At the DM's discretion, spellcasting may be similarly affected. The DM should play on the party's fear over the stability of the bridge. The swaying during combat is tremendous, and it should make even the sturdiest PC wince in fear.

If both of the owl's talons grasp a single PC, the owl plucks the character off the bridge and drops him into the chasm the following round.

14. The Broken Road. At this point, the river that feeds the Silver Lake slides out of the mountains. On the eastern side, a broken road winds alongside the river bank and into the range. On the western side, the river hugs the edge of the mountains.

15. Maedar Mountains. The mountains surge up from the ground to sheer cliffs and lofty peaks. They are impassable here (the nearest pass being many days travel to the west). The PCs can move only a short distance into the mountain range before the faces grow too steep and dangerous to climb. Even thieves and mountaineers find travel through here impossible, except where the source of the Silver River emerges from the mountains.

16. The Source. As mentioned above, the only access to the source is along a narrow roadway on the east side of the Silver River. It winds through the mountains and finally emerges into an isolated valley. Read or paraphrase the following to the players when they reach the source:

> The broken road that leads you deeper into the mountains clings to the rocky side of a sheer cliff. You round a sharp corner and find yourself in a large valley surrounded on all sides by rock walls. This is the source of The Silver River, a turbulent pool that occupies half the valley. The river bursts from the pool and goes crashing through the mountains. The water is incredibly violent. The flowers that grow at the edge of the pool are over three feet tall, with bright red, yellow, and orange blossoms and massive petals like thick leather lying on the ground.
>
> Next to the pool are the crumbled remains of a collection of stone buildings, so overgrown with weeds and plants they are barely recognizable. There is virtually nothing left standing. In the center of the mess is a shattered stone courtyard about fifty feet to a side. Years of erosion and seasonal changes have pushed the rocks into a jumble of stone slabs. In the center of the courtyard is a statue, perfect and untouched by time.

> The only feature marring the sculpture is a thick leafy bush that grows at its base and conceals the sculpture's feet. Judging by the amount of weeds choking the rubble, this place must be ancient. Whatever once stood here is now long gone. Then you notice you are not alone here. Off to the left is what looks like a huge ball of bony spikes shuffling amid the bushes. It is the most gigantic porcupine you have ever seen! It is easily ten feet long and covered with massive quills that bob and weave as it lumbers slowly across the courtyard to the bush at the base of the statue. It lifts its furry head and begins munching on the plant, grunting contentedly as it eats.

Immediately make a roll for each PC to see if he detects scrying (as per the *DMG* under *crystal ball*). Karynne has at last emerged from her tree and is observing the PCs through her pool. Proceed directly to "Restoring the Forest" below as soon as there is a lull in activity and you feel the timing is appropriate.

There are several things that can happen here. Depending on the PCs' timing, they may occur one at a time or all at once.

The Giant Porcupine

Obviously the porcupine is not aggressive and is not a danger to the PCs as long as they don't threaten it. If they leave it alone, the porcupine finishes eating the bush and then goes to sleep at the base of the statue about 150' away. Anyone approaching within 30' of the creature is considered an enemy. The porcupine hisses a warning, giving the intruder one round to retreat before it attacks.

Giant porcupine: AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 6; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA shoot quills up to 30' once/turn (all creatures in area of effect must save vs. paralysis or be hit by 1d6 quills for 1–4 hp damage each); SD quills; SZ L (10' long); ML 6; XP 650; *MM*/241 (porcupine, modified).

The porcupine can be lured (or forced) away by a multitude of magical means. He can be frightened away by a large burst of light or fire, or a well-placed arrow shot in the rump. Porcupines love salt, and this one can be lured away if the PCs have a pound of it. Fresh fruits can also entice the creature to move away. A handful of Thomas' bear repellent also does the trick. The PCs have to be patient if they intend to wait for it to leave on its own; the porcupine rests at the base of the statue for the next two days.

As a last resort the PCs can try to drive the creature away by killing or wounding it, but at a penalty of 650 XP. The PCs should be awarded full XP value for the porcupine if they can move it away without killing or hurting it.

Deadly Beauty

The huge flowers at the edge of the pool are actually tri-flower fronds. Anyone approaching the pool has a 65% chance of passing within range of one.

Tri-flower fronds (7): AL nil; AC 9; MV nil; HD 2+8; hp 15 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1 + special; Dmg 1–6; SA orange blossom causes paralysis, yellow blossom causes 2d4 hp acid damage/round, red frond drains 1d6 hp blood; SZ M (6' long); ML 10; XP 175; *MM*/291.

These plants are unique in two ways. The orange frond's tendrils cause complete paralysis, not a coma. Thus the victim can see, hear, feel and even speak, but he cannot move. In addition to the poison tendrils, the orange blossom has a long spiny tentacle that can lash out at targets up to 8' away.

If any PC looks into the pool near the flowers he notices a chunk of bright red pottery (see below for details).

The Statue

The statue appears unremarkable, except for its apparent lack of erosion and damage from the elements. Strong protective magic is detected if the PCs have the means. Unfortunately, the porcupine is lunching at the base of this statue and does not let the PCs approach. The animal has to be driven away somehow (see above).

The statue is of a noble-looking woman in a rumpled robe. Her hands are concealed beneath the folds, and her hair cascades over the hood down to her waist. The statue cannot be damaged by any powers at the PCs' disposal, nor can it be moved.

The PCs can fume over this for as long as they like, but there is nothing interesting about the statue. There is, however, an old stone coffer buried under two inches of dirt at the base of the statue. Inside the coffer are 26 pp, two simple gold bracelets (70 gp each), five tiny blue diamonds in a velvet pouch (total 225 gp), a plain silver pendant on an iron chain (45 gp), and a large white pearl (300 gp).

The contents of this stash are coated with the spores of a dormant bacteria. There is a 30% chance that anyone who handles the booty with their bare hands touches their mouth and catches a mild case of the Tanar'ri Sweats. Within four hours, the PC feels uncomfortably hot, no matter what the actual temperature is. Within five hours, the fever is so severe the PC strips off armor and clothing in order to cool off. After six hours, the PC collapses from exhaustion and remains unconscious for the duration of the sickness. At this point, the player must roll a saving throw vs. poison. If successful, the character recovers after a full day's rest. If the roll fails, the PC loses 4 Strength points and all but one of his hit points, and he remains unconscious for three days. Upon awakening, the PCs hit points can be healed normally, and his Strength returns at the rate of one point per week.

Restoring the Forest

As mentioned above, use this encounter at any time the DM feels is appropriate. Read or paraphrase the following:

> A voice suddenly bubbles into your mind. "Go to the source. Remove that which does not belong."

This is Karynne using her magical pool and telepathy to communicate.

The beaker was originally a large clay jar painted bright red. The six pieces are plainly visible if the party gets close enough, and *detect magic* and *true seeing* reveals them immediately. If the PCs simply conduct a casual search from shore, they find one piece in the water near the giant flowers (see "Deadly Beauty," above). Further searching deeper into the pool reveals one more piece every hour.

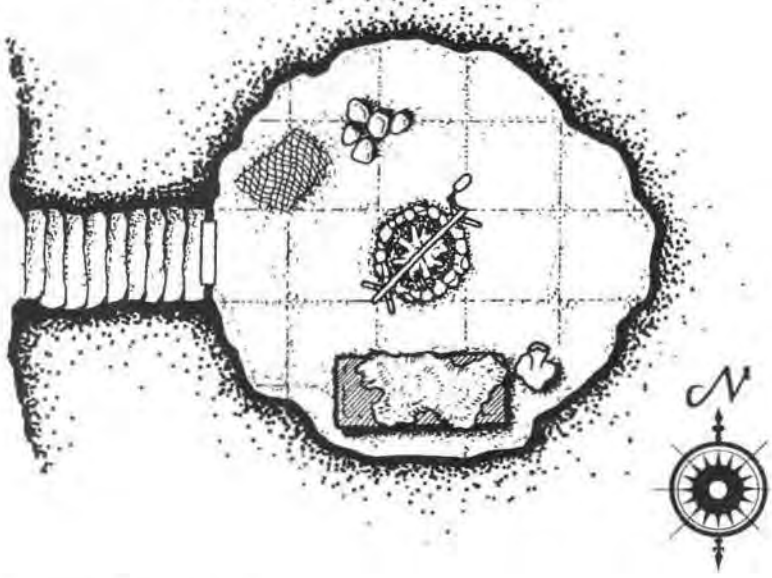
When all six pieces are found and removed, the water calms remarkably. The shards look totally ordinary, though they strongly radiate magic. If held by a mage during spellcasting, the spell will have maximum range, duration, and effect. The shard crumbles to dust after the casting. If the PCs try to reassemble the beaker, the pieces fit together, but the magic has been forever lost.

Continued on page 65

SIDE TREKS

Stone Giant's Lair

One square = 10 feet



BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Cartography by Diesel

"Avenging Murik" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure designed for 3–5 characters of levels 4–6 (about 18 total levels). The module can be placed in any temperate wilderness setting. Players who excel at role playing may find the adventure more rewarding than hack-and-slash types. At least one character should possess a silver or magical weapon.

The Mourning Dwarf

The characters are hiking across a vast, untamed wilderness or traveling a dirt trail when they happen upon a pair of dwarves. Read or paraphrase the following:

> You climb to the crest of a hill and spot an armored dwarf. The red-bearded fellow is down on one knee, his balance maintained by a large battle axe planted firmly in the ground. The dwarf's head is lowered, and he has positioned himself next to a small pile of rocks. He seems to be mumbling a silent prayer for whomever is buried beneath the cairn. Further down the hillside, waiting impatiently, is a second dwarf in leather armor.

The dwarf, Ruskar, is kneeling before the grave of his dearly departed brother, Murik. The two dwarves were exploring the wilderness when they encountered a third dwarf with a silver stripe through his thick black beard (the same dwarf seen standing further down the hill). The dwarf stranger, Jorun, convinced Ruskar and Murik to help him plunder the lair of an "evil giant" (actually a peaceful but reclusive stone giant). Ruskar and Murik were told that the giant had stolen gold from a nearby dwarven mine, which was all the incentive they needed to attack.

Unfortunately, the dwarves handled their encounter with the giant poorly. Jorun displayed fine thieving skills by helping the brothers sneak into the giant's lair. However, the dwarves fared poorly from that point. Although the dwarven brothers landed some solid blows, the giant's stony hide made him difficult to hit. Jorun escaped without injury, and Ruskar fled with minor wounds. Murik, however, was crushed beneath a hurled boulder as he limped away from the giant's lair. Ruskar managed to drag his brother's body three miles to a hilltop, but there was nothing he could do to save Murik's life. (By the time the PCs arrive, Murik has been dead too long to save using healing magic.)

Ruskar plans to return to the giant's lair and avenge his brother's death. Jorun is also eager to claim the stone giant's gold. Unknown to Ruskar, Jorun is actually an evil werebadger. The giant's sack of gold is not dwarven (at least, not to Jorun's knowledge). In fact, the gold was given to the giant by human adventurers who paid him to be their wilderness guide. (The werebadger was hiding behind a rock and witnessed the transaction.)

Jorun and Ruskar petition the characters to join them on their return visit to the giant's lair. Ruskar does nothing to hide his anger and sorrow. He and Murik were very close. Jorun voices his interest in seeing the "dwarven gold returned to its proper owners" but has no love for Ruskar or his dead brother. The two dwarves are united only because they share a common goal, but the werebadger cares for nothing but the gold.

Ruskar Ironskull: AL LN; AC 5 (4 with shield); MV 6; F4; hp 29 (38 at full); THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 17 (+1/+1), D 11, C 16, I 10, W 12, Ch 12; SA +1 to hit orcs, half-orcs, goblins and hobgoblins; SD +4 to saves vs. magic and poison; large humanoids are –4 to hit; 60' infravision; SZ S; ML 16; chain mail, shield, battle axe.

Jorun Silverdelve (werebadger): AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, burrow 3; HD 5 (T4); hp 22; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d4 or by weapon; SA lycanthropy, berserk frenzy (+1 to hit with claws, +3 to hit with bite with double normal chance of contracting lycanthropy); SD silver or magical weapons to hit; SZ S; ML 13 (19 when berserk); XP 650; *Monstrous Compendium® Annual, Volume One* (lycanthrope).

In his dwarf form, Jorun wears leather armor, carries a hand axe, and possesses the skills of a 4th-level thief

(Dexterity 18): PP 45%, OL 45%, FRT 45%, MS 50%, HS 55%, DN 35%, CW 60%, RL –5%.

Joining the Dwarves

If the characters are persuaded to help the dwarves retrieve the "stolen gold" and avenge Murik's death, Jorun leads them back to the giant's abode located roughly three miles from Murik's cairn. PCs who require further information about the giant and his lair are given the following description by Ruskar:

> "Hitting the giant was like striking granite. Back home they're known as stone giants because of their thick gray hides and chiselled appearance. This giant stood at least fifteen feet tall, with the coldest blue eyes I've ever seen. Its lair is a sunken structure capped with stone. The place is about three miles from here. Jorun knows the way."

Jorun concurs with Ruskar. PCs who have encountered stone giants before may realize that they are not typically violent, evil creatures. However, Ruskar and Jorun both swear to this particular giant's foul nature.

The Stone Giant's Lair

The stone giant's lair is embedded in the rocky earth so that only its domed roof is visible above ground level. The lair is cold but comfortable to the giant. Roughly-hewn stairs lead down to a heavy stone door that requires a successful Open Doors roll to budge. The entrance is 15' high, but the 18'-tall giant must still duck to get through the door!

The heavy stone door pushes open to reveal a roughly circular chamber measuring 50' in diameter. The domed ceiling reaches a height of 25' at the center. Furnishings include a stone slab covered with animal skins and straw (the giant's bed), a makeshift wooden spit placed over a 1'-deep firepit carved into the floor, a pile of five heavy rocks (for throwing), a fishing net made from reeds and branches, and a sack containing 1,500 gp and five golden bracelets (worth 250 gp each). Each gold crown bears the emblem of a distant human city, implying that the gold is not of dwarven origin. The sack is stashed at the foot of the giant's bed, next to his oversized club (see below).

When the dwarves and the PCs arrive, there is only a 30% chance that the giant is home. Most of the giant's time is spent scouring the wilderness for edibles (the giant enjoys a healthy diet of fruits and fish), and sometimes the giant is approached as a friendly guide (though not today). If the giant is away, his club is gone, and there's a 50% chance that he took his fishing net as well. The giant has a cumulative 5% chance/turn of returning from his "hunt."

Jorun does not wait until the giant's return before making off with the sack of gold. With the sack slung over one shoulder, the werebadger assures the characters that he will return the gold safely to his "dwarven brothers" in the mine. Ruskar, on the other hand, refuses to leave until he settles the score with the giant. If the giant is present when the dwarves and PCs arrive, he recognizes his assailants (Ruskar in particular), seizes his club, and prepares to defend both himself and his treasure.

The giant, Gray, speaks Common as well as his native tongue. He lost his temper when the dwarves attacked him the first time, and he regrets having caused the death of Ruskar's brother. However, the vindictive dwarf barely gives the giant a chance to open his mouth before charging forth with his battle axe flailing. When he spots the PCs in the company of the dwarves, Gray bellows, "I told you to leave me alone! Go away before I have to hurt you!" Characters hearing this should begin to suspect that something is amiss.

To avoid needless bloodshed, the PCs must find some way to restrain Ruskar and make peace with the giant. The giant is willing to offer his apology to the dwarf if the dwarf in turn explains why he and Murik attacked the giant's lair in the first place. While the PCs are fighting or negotiating with the giant, Jorun tries to steal the sack of gold. If the werebadger is successful and the giant notices the theft, he accuses the party of treachery and attacks! If the PCs suspect that Jorun is the cause of all the strife, they may persuade the giant to help them track the evil lycanthrope as it retreats into the nearby forest. Gray has the tracking proficiency of a skilled ranger (18). The stone giant can use his net to ensnare the werebadger, but the werebadger's claws are sharp enough to cut through the net in one round.

Gray (adult stone giant): INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+3; hp 78 (95 at full); THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+8 (punch) or 2d6+8 (club); SA hurl rocks for 3d10 hp damage (300 yards); SD catch missiles 90% of the time; SZ H (18' tall); ML 16; XP 7,000; *MM*/145 (giant).

There are plenty of large rocks around the base of the stone giant's lair. If lured outside, Gray can hurl small boulders without fear of running out of ammunition.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters help Ruskar kill Gray, they should receive only half experience points for slaying the giant. If the characters befriend Gray and help the giant make peace with Ruskar, they should receive full experience points for the giant. If Jorun is exposed as the villain, the werebadger tries to make good his escape, taking the giant's treasure if possible. The giant's sack is quite heavy, encumbering the werebadger and reducing his movement by 2. If the weight of the gold slows his escape to the point where capture is a distinct possibility, the werebadger takes the five golden bracelets and leaves the rest of the treasure behind. If he cannot evade pursuit, the werebadger turns and attacks, throwing himself into a berserk frenzy and fighting to the death.

If the issue between Ruskar and the giant is cleared up to their mutual satisfaction, Gray gives Ruskar and the PCs the five golden bracelets as compensation for their trouble and loss. He may even be persuaded to guide the PCs safely to the nearest settlement. Ruskar offers his humble apology for luring the PCs into Jorun's scheme and asks to accompany them on their journey. He may be treated as a henchman or developed as a full-fledged NPC. Ω

THE SUNKEN SHADOW

BY JAMES WYATT

Slippery when wet

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography by Diesel

James Wyatt is a technical writer, multimedia guru, and web designer in Madison, Wisconsin. His life lately has been revolving around his son, Carter, who was born last January. Fortunately, Carter has learned to sleep on his papa's chest while James taps away at his computer into the wee hours.

"The Sunken Shadow" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–5 good-aligned PCs of levels 1–3 (about 8 total levels). The adventure takes place in the coastal ocean waters around a coral reef; the PCs are provided *potions of water breathing* by their employer in the adventure. As DM, you should review the rules in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* concerning movement and combat underwater, as well as the rules for swimming in the *Player's Handbook*. If you are using the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics* rules, consult the section in that book which covers underwater combat. A sidebar on page 28 summarizes the most important rules for underwater adventuring.

This adventure may be set on any campaign world. See the section entitled "Suggested Adventure Locations" below.

Adventure Background

Arkos Seatamer was a well-known ship captain—a paladin who devoted his life to battling pirates. Together with his closest friend, a priest named Devek Harpwind, Arkos cruised the waters around his homeland aboard his splendid galley, the *Foaming Wave*. As the years of his privateering passed, however, Arkos slowly became more like his hated foes, developing a cruel streak and becoming obsessive about his mission, yet maintaining a reputation for bravery and justice. About a month ago, Arkos encountered a pirate ship, the *Striking Shadow*, and engaged the ship in combat. Ramming the pirate vessel and tearing a huge breach in its hull, Arkos himself leapt aboard the sinking vessel and captured the pirate queen, a woman called Kirella Shadowgale. Arkos brought his captive aboard his ship while the pirate crew floundered in the water, crying for mercy from the uncaring Seatamer.

Arkos bound the pirate queen, intending to bring her home in triumph and see her publicly executed for her crimes. As he looked at his captive,

however, Arkos found himself consumed with greed for the golden armband she wore. The armband, shaped like a coiled eel, was a magical item designed to induce such lust in the weak-willed, a twisted gift to the pirate queen from a lich who enjoyed creating cursed items. Arkos moved to slay Kirella in order to take the band, but his friend Devek tried to stay his hand. Lashing out in anger and frustration, Arkos drove his cutlass into his friend's body and then killed Kirella Shadowgale to claim his prize. As Devek Harpwind lay dying, his lips formed a horrible curse upon his former companion and ally, forcing him to become a were-eel each night until he provides Devek a proper burial.

As if in response to Arkos' evil deeds, a freak storm arose. Massive winds and driving rain battered his galley. Lightning danced off the mast of the ship, and water washed over the gunwales. At last, as the timbers of the vessel splintered, the *Foaming Wave* disappeared beneath the waters.

Arkos Seatamer could not fathom how he survived the shipwreck when his entire crew perished. The golden armband went down with the ship while the captain assumed eel form. He came to consciousness on dry land several days later, but he had no recollection of that time. Assembling a new crew and purchasing a new vessel in a major port city, Arkos prepared himself to continue his war against piracy. To this day, he feels remorse over his deeds but continues to think of himself as a paladin, though he will never have claim to that title again.

With each nightfall since the shipwreck, Arkos finds himself consumed with hunger—a hunger that only blood can satisfy. In the darkness, he wrestles with an overwhelming temptation, and inevitably he succumbs: taking the form of a hideous cross between eel and man, he has hunted and devoured lone sailors, even a group of four on the night before the adventure begins. Arkos has begun to seek some means of escape from the curse. Remembering the words of his friend's curse, he has decided to recover Devek Harpwind's body from the deep. Still driven by lust for the armband, he also seeks to recover it from the wrecks as well.

Arkos hires the PCs to accomplish these tasks, rather than doing them himself. He is terrified of the were-eel that he has become, and he fears that entering the water triggers his curse, transforming him into a monster and robbing him of his rational faculties. As a bloodthirsty giant eel, he would be incapable of completing the mission he began, and the curse would remain unbroken.

Kirella Shadowgale, killed by Arkos Seatamer for her armband, continues to haunt the wreck of the two ships. She is now a lacedon-ghast and has been feeding on the corpses of the two ships' crews. She looks very much as she did in life, despite her elongated tongue, teeth, and nails. Her life-like appearance only adds to the horror of seeing this beautiful human woman gnawing on a human bone underwater. She does possess the characteristic stench of a ghast, though this is diluted in the water, giving PCs a +2 bonus to their saving throws against its nauseating effects. Kirella is a subtle opponent and not likely to make a frontal assault on two or more armed characters. She stalks the PCs throughout their exploration of the wrecks, attacking with surprise, hoping to trap and drown them in a ship's cabin, finally attacking them directly only when they find the golden armband that she still craves.

Even while Kirella haunts the shipwrecks, the trauma of Devek Harpwind's murder and the curse he laid on Arkos has its own lingering effects. His phantom continues to play out the emotion-charged scene in the sunken captain's cabin among the wreckage of the *Foaming Wave*. A hazy image of Devek Harpwind, clutching a bloody wound, forever repeats the damning words of the curse that transformed Arkos Seatamer into a were-eel. As the PCs witness this re-enactment of Devek's death, they should realize the truth of Arkos' crime, the nature of his curse, and perhaps the curse of the armband as well. Thus, beyond simply destroying Kirella Shadowgale and attempting to kill the were-eel, the PCs can earn more experience points for breaking Arkos' twin curses—by laying Devek Harpwind to rest and destroying the eel armband. Once this is accomplished, the PCs may attempt to bring Arkos Seatamer to justice for his crimes.

Suggested Adventure Locations

The DM should place the shipwreck site somewhere in warm, coastal waters, approximately 210 miles away from the PCs' starting location (a major port city). The DM should also locate a smaller town or village where Devek Harpwind must be laid to rest, within 60 miles of the shipwrecks. Possible locations in TSR's campaign worlds are listed below.

FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting: The best location in the Realms for this adventure is the Nelanther. The PCs should begin the adventure in Murann, in Amn, and the shipwrecks should be located between the Sea Tower of Irphong and Velen. Devek Harpwind's burial site should be near Velen. If the PCs begin in Calimport instead, the shipwreck should be around the peninsula of Calimshan near the small islands there, with Devek's home town being Memnon.

AL-QADIM® campaign: The shipwrecks can be located nearly anywhere in the Crowded Sea. Refer to the small-scale map in the AL-QADIM boxed set for locations of coral reefs around the islands there.

BIRTHRIGHT® setting: Regent player characters are not recommended for this adventure. Non-regent PCs should begin in Bindier (in Brosengae), Ilien or Aenier (in Ilien), or Aerele (in Diemed). The shipwrecks are located off the coast of Mieres, and Devek is a native of that domain. Alternatively, if you are using the *Cities of the Sun* campaign expansion, the PCs can begin in either Mairada (in Mairada) or Masetiele (in Suiriene), and travel to the shipwreck sites off the coast of Boloshoy Kavkaz (in the Magian's domain). Devek's home town is a small Vos village in the Magian's realm.

For the PCs

Lately you've been hearing stories about gold and glory to be won on the waves. One name keeps coming up: the name of a paladin who has spent his life on the high seas, waging a never-ending war against pirates. His name is Arkos Seatamer, a man to be admired, respected, and—for those involved in piracy—feared.

The stories go on to say that Arkos Seatamer lost a ship. About a month ago, the paladin captain captured a notorious pirate queen, Kirella Shadowgale, aboard her dreaded ship, the *Striking Shadow*. The pirate's treasure must have gone down with

her ship, which would be interesting enough. But within an hour of Kirella Shadowgale's capture, the paladin's ship went down as well, battered by a freak storm. The paladin's entire crew was lost, but the captain miraculously survived—a testimony, no doubt, to the gods' favor upon him. Arkos Seatamer has bought a new ship and taken on a new crew, and he continues his war against piracy.

The rumors circulate as rumors do, having aroused the curiosity and interest of much of the population. The word that seems most promising comes to you from a man who says he's part of Arkos Seatamer's new crew.

"Yes, it's true," he says. "All the rumors are true. The captain did lose a ship in a storm. And now he's looking to hire a few brave souls to go diving to the wrecks. There's certainly treasure to be won, and you'd be helping out a noble man. If you're interested, meet him on the temple steps at noon."

The crewman—a squat sailor named Farco, with bulging eyes and small ears—is a new member of the crew and knows very little about Arkos Seatamer and the loss of his ship. "Best to ask the captain himself," he replies to any probing questions.

Chapter One: Rumors and Tales

There are other rumors going around town concerning Arkos and his ships. Depending on what types of questions the PCs are asking, they may hear one or more of the following tales:

❖ "The deck was washed with blood." If the PCs ask questions specifically about any strange occurrences or mysterious disappearances, they may hear a variety of reports. Arkos Seatamer has been in town for a little over a week with his new ship, and he has killed at least one person every night. Most of these "disappearances" have not aroused much notice—sailors come and go in a city this size—and it's not very likely that the PCs hear of them. If they spend at least an hour asking questions, however, they are pointed in the direction of an old sea-dog named Orthic Sealsfriend, captain of the *Prancing Dolphin*. They can find him in his favorite tavern (the "Rushlight's Ember"), sitting in a corner staring into space, a mug of ale hardly touched in front of him. It is difficult to get Orthic to speak, but a successful Charisma check allows a PC to draw this brief story out of him:

"I don't know what happened," the big man sighs. "We came in for shore leave last night and left four men on the ship to keep watch. I went back this morning, just to check on things, and the men were gone. The deck was bare, but down below—the lower deck was washed with blood."

The thing that disturbs the captain most (requiring another successful Charisma check to get it out of him) is the footprint he saw in the blood. The print was fully 18" long, with only three toes and—near as he could make out—webbing between the toes.

The captain's tale is completely true—all four men on board the *Prancing Dolphin* fell victim to Arkos Seatamer's voracious appetite. Normally, Arkos kills only once a night, and that was his intention when he came aboard the *Prancing Dolphin*. However, his chosen victim (the sailor on watch during the midnight shift) managed to escape his first attack, running below deck to wake his companions. Chasing his prey, Arkos found himself surrounded by four men with swords and ended up killing them all.

❖ "A foul creature of the deep." Another rumor, totally without basis in fact, is repeated to PCs who ask about the circumstances of the sinking of the *Foaming Wave*. The man telling the story is a mate on another ship, a flashy young gentleman named Feldon, carrying a cutlass. He expects some gold for the tale.

"You want to know how the *Foaming Wave* went down? Listen up, I'll tell you the tale." He clears his throat dramatically. "Now, I'm sure you've heard how Seatamer sank the pirate ship, the *Striking Shadow*. A fierce battle it was, but finally the *Foaming Wave* got her ram into the other, and the pirate ship went down.

"Any fool can tell you that much. But what they don't tell you about is the monster. A foul creature of the deep it was, the kraken, with powers over wind and wave. So fierce was its anger—because the pirate captain had a pact with the thing, you see—so fierce that a storm arose around it as it closed in on Seatamer's ship. The waves crashed over the gunwales, but the *Foaming Wave* held firm. But as the wind's fury peaked and the water was threatening to overwhelm the vessel, a gigantic tentacle, as thick as the ship's hull and five times as long, emerged from the sea and coiled itself around the *Foaming Wave*.

"Drawing his sword, the captain ran to the thing and hacked at it, green slime flying from every cut. It didn't release its hold, though, and the ship went under. The captain wouldn't give up. He kept cutting at it. Next thing he knew, a huge yellow eye was staring him right in the face. Undaunted, Seatamer stabbed his sword into the monster's eye. The kraken shot out a cloud of ink and fled the scene! The captain grabbed a piece of mast that was ripped from the ship, and he floated in to shore."

If asked to name his source, Feldon claims to have heard the story directly from Arkos Seatamer. The captain himself readily proves Feldon a liar.

❖ "I'm no gossip." Characters asking about the captain's character hear many glowing reports of his bravery, honesty, and purity. Arkos Seatamer has been battling pirates in the area for 10 years, and some say he has single-handedly kept the economy of the area from faltering under the weight of pirate attacks. Only after digging for dirt for at least three hours do the PCs find anyone willing to say anything negative about Arkos Seatamer. The teller of the tale is a bitter young woman named Akara, who probably would be quite attractive if she ever stopped scowling.

"Paladin? Hrmph. I've never seen a paladin do what I've seen Seatamer do." She tosses her hair and folds her arms. "I'm no gossip, but you asked about him, and so I'm honor-bound to tell you the gods' truth. Listen.

"I was standing at my window one day this week, and I see this Seatamer walking down the alley behind my house. And there's a little boy trailing after him—honestly, that poor child could not have been more than seven years old. And it's obvious to me that this child just worships this famous sea captain—well, you know how children do fawn over these so-called heroes. But do you think

that paladin had a single kind word for that poor boy? Not a one. 'Leave me alone!' he started shouting. 'Get away from me, you little street rat!' Gods' truth, those were his very words. Do those sound like the words of a noble paladin? Not to me, they don't.

"But that's not the worst of it. Oh, I hate even to say such a thing, but you did ask me. Well, you know the boy wouldn't leave the captain alone, so what do you think he did? He hit the boy. And no mere swat on the rump, either. He drew back and slapped that poor child like he was a pirate captain or something." She wipes a tear from her eye. "I saw the boy's body crumple and fly through the air like so many rags. Then the captain just stormed off.

"So there's your paladin. Tell me if you can, what kind of paladin would hit an innocent little child like that? No paladin at all, that's what I say."

Akara is lying, plain and simple. She is as malicious as her constant scowl would suggest, and she is seeking to damage Arkos' reputation in response to an imagined wrong. A year ago, while Arkos was in port here, Akara met him and spoke with him briefly at a party in the sea captain's honor. Akara cherished the memory of their meeting and wrote dozens of letters to Arkos in his absence during the past year. When Arkos returned to the city after the wreck of the *Foaming Wave*, she sought him out and presented him with the stack of letters. Baffled, Arkos strained to remember who this woman was and tried to deal with an uncomfortable situation as graciously as he could. Akara was indignant that he didn't even remember her. Her description of Arkos' behavior toward this imaginary child is a projection of her perception of how he treated her, and she uses this story as an attempt to strike back at him. So far, nobody has believed her.

The Captain

If the PCs seek out Arkos Seatamer, they find the captain sitting alone on the temple steps as the sun reaches its zenith. He stands as the PCs approach, smiling warmly and extending his hands in greeting. (See the sidebar on the following page for a description of Arkos.)

The captain is hiring adventurers to go diving into the wrecks. He needs two things recovered from the wreck of the *Foaming Wave:* a golden armband in the shape of a coiled eel, and the body of a man named Devek Harpwind. He offers to provide *potions of water breathing* to facilitate their diving, and he allows them to keep any other treasure they find among the wrecks. He estimates that the *Foaming Wave* carried about 6,500 gp worth of treasure and cargo salvaged from pirate ships; there's no knowing how much the *Striking Shadow* had on board. Naturally, he also transports the PCs to and from the shipwreck site, about three days' journey from this city.

The captain provides the PCs with a description of Devek Harpwind, which should be enough for them to identify his body. He was tall and slender, with fair skin and sandy brown hair. He wore a rich blue cloak and a holy symbol around his neck. (Devek worships the same deity that Arkos does, which might be Torm in the Forgotten Realms, Haelyn or Avani in Cerilia, Hajama or Hakiyah in Zakhara, Hieroneous in Greyhawk, Halav in Mystara, Manannan mac Lir in a Celtic pantheon, Surya or Ushas in an Indian culture, or Tyr in a Norse setting. Fill in appropriate details for the priest's faith according to your campaign.)

If the PCs ask why Arkos Seatamer does not do the diving himself, he explains that he is not a strong swimmer and is much more comfortable fighting on the rolling decks of a ship than diving into the ocean. Likewise, this is a risky mission and not an appropriate task for his newly-hired crew. If they ask about the importance of the armband, he admits that it is magical and has particular value to him, but he is reluctant to explain any further. If they ask about the body to be recovered, Arkos explains that Devek was a personal friend, and he wishes to give him a proper burial. Arkos is not open to negotiation on the terms of the agreement, since he believes his offer is more than fair.

Assuming the PCs accept Arkos' offer of employment, Arkos tells them to report to the docks before 5:00 A.M. the next morning. They leave at dawn on Arkos' new ship, the *Ocean's Call*. The PCs spend the night in their rooms in the city and hear of no strange incidents during the night.

Chapter Two: Weigh Anchor!

The *Ocean's Call* is a great galley, just like Arkos' previous ship. The galley is crewed by 232 rowers and 15 other crew members. The crew members and the rowers are hired and free, not slaves. They are all infected by Arkos Seatamer's burning hatred of pirates and are hopeful of earning divine blessings as well as more earthly rewards through serving him. The crew is entirely new, of course, since none of Arkos' previous crew survived the wreck of the *Foaming Wave*. This is their first voyage on the new ship, and they simmer with anticipation of what lies ahead. See the sidebar on the following page for descriptions of the crew.

a. Main Deck. The deck is kept clean, and the rigging is tidy. Characters over 6' tall must be careful not to hit their heads on the ropes that support the sail. The gunwale extends about 2' above the surface of the deck, with the ship's oars protruding through it. There is no rail above the gunwale.

b. Forward Area. A heavy catapult is mounted here, aiming straight forward. A lookout is usually stationed in the very front of the prow.

c. Mast. The ship's single mast rises from the center of the deck here. It is grounded in the keel in the cargo hold and extends about 50' above the main deck.

d. Cargo Hatch. Two doors swing open and up to expose the cargo hold. Cargo is lowered or lifted by a crane when the ship is docked; the rest of the time, these doors are chained shut.

e. Forward Hatch. Two doors swing open toward the rear of the ship to allow crew members access to the lower decks. Two ladders lead to the partial deck below.

f. Rowers' Benches. The ship's rowers, 124 on the upper deck, 108 on the middle deck, sit two to a bench along the sides of the ships. Most of them sleep on or near their benches as well. The lower banks of oars and benches are on a partial deck—the deck is open in the middle to the cargo hold. Ladders at either end of the open space lead below into the hold.

The Ocean's Call

Arkos Seatamer, Captain and Navigator:

Human form: AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; F5; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (cutlass); S 12, D 8, C 10, I 12, W 13, Ch 17; XP 420.

Hybrid form: AL CE; AC 6; MV 12, swim 9; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 15 bite, 13 cutlass; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bite) or 1d6+7 (cutlass); SD coral or magical weapon to hit; S 18/00 (+3/+6); XP 420.

Eel form: AL CE; AC 6; MV swim 9; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite); SD coral or magical weapon to hit; XP 420.

Arkos Seatamer is the victim of a horrible curse, but he is not an innocent victim. Long before Devek Harpwind spoke the words that caused his nightly metamorphosis, Arkos had lost his paladinhood and had begun a journey down the path of evil. Devek's curse merely transformed Arkos' body to match his already warped soul.

Because of the particular nature of the curse, Arkos is a unique lycanthrope. While the curse demands that Arkos change into his eel form every night, he retains some measure of control over when the transformation occurs. Every night, as the sun sets, Arkos begins to feel the stirrings of an overwhelming hunger. Deep in the most animalistic reaches of his mind, he knows that this hunger can be satisfied only with flesh, and he knows that he can be fed only if he changes shape.

Early in the night, he occupies himself with reading or work on the decks, trying to distract himself from the gnawing hunger, but as night progresses the hunger becomes more and more irresistible, until it is impossible to ignore. At this point, usually sometime around midnight, Arkos retires to a secluded place near the sea and transforms. Often, he takes his eel form first, gliding through the water until the craving for human flesh overwhelms him. Then, he returns to the human world, takes his hybrid form and finds a suitable victim.

During the night, while the hunger is upon him, Arkos is completely obsessed with bloodlust, to the point where he can concentrate on nothing else. When he changes shape, this preoccupation is complete. This prevents him from using his eel form to search the shipwrecks for the armband, for example—while he is in his bestial forms, he can think of nothing but his hunger and the kill.

No sooner does he kill every night, however, than some semblance of his old morality returns to him. Even in his beast form, and while he is still finishing his grisly meal, he is overcome with feelings of guilt and remorse, disgust and self-hatred. He then immediately returns to his bed and reverts to human form, falling asleep within a round.

In his human form, Arkos is haunted by memories of the night, appalled at his weakness in being unable to resist the hunger. He generally copes with these emotions by keeping busy, making himself the model of an efficient ship captain. Somehow he always manages to maintain a courteous and polite manner. He is gracious even when insulted but firm when he knows he's right. He is almost always smiling, though not too broadly.

In his human form, Arkos is a short, middle-aged man, but his erect posture makes him seem taller. He is slight of build, not especially muscular, but he carries himself with such dignity and presence that he exudes a sense of power. His close-cut hair is thick and black, and his face is clean-shaven. He wears a boiled leather breastplate and softer leather over his arms and legs, practical boots, and a weathered blue cloak. A shield and a trident are slung on his back, and a cutlass hangs from his belt.

In hybrid form, Arkos is a monstrous cross between eel and man. He has a powerfully-muscled human body, an eel's head and tail, finned calves and flipper-like feet. His skin is a sickly cross between human flesh and the tiny, smooth scales of an eel, dully reflecting any nearby light. In his beast form, he is a 12'-long moray eel, his huge mouth filled with sharp teeth.

When he reverts to human form, Arkos heals 10–60% of any damage inflicted on him in his beast forms. If he is killed in beast form, he reverts to human form immediately.

Melthos Overwind, First Mate and Pilot: AL LG; AC 6; MV 12; Pal 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (cutlass); SD immune to disease, aura of *protection from evil*, +2 bonus to saves; S 15, D 15, C 11, I 11, W 16, Ch 17.

Other paladin abilities: Heal 4 hp/day, *cure disease* once/week, *detect evil intent* (60' range).

The first mate of the *Ocean's Call* is a paladin named Melthos Overwind, a young man who idolizes Arkos Seatamer and has always hoped for the opportunity to follow in his footsteps. Serving as a member of his crew is a dream come true for Melthos. As a paladin, he is a natural leader, and Arkos relies on him to keep the crew in line. The PCs would be wise to befriend him and rely on him for the same important task.

Melthos has staked his life on Arkos Seatamer's reputation, which may well have been the worst decision of his life. He is psychologically incapable of admitting this fact, however, which prevents him from seeing Arkos as anything but the noblest and purest of paladins, whatever evidence might be presented to the contrary. He indulges in incredible twists of logic to reconcile Arkos' behavior with his idealized image of the captain—for example, suggesting that there is no point to waking the captain after a crew member has been killed by an eel-beast. He honestly believes these fantasies—he has to. His world depends on it.

Melthos is in his early 20's with dark brown hair and a ruddy complexion. He is over 6' tall and very fit. He imitates Arkos' dress, wearing leather armor and a blue cloak, carrying a shield, a cutlass at his belt, and a trident on his back.

Farco, Boatswain: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; ML 12.

Farco is a squat man with bulging eyes and small ears, giving him an almost fish-like appearance. Despite his odd looks, he is a good-hearted and kind man, and he knows an incredible amount about ships. On the voyage, he keeps an eye on the PCs to make sure the other crew members don't give them a hard time, and he goes out of his way to make sure they get any questions answered and any supplies they need.

Farco has three mates to help in his work. **Mostek** is a tall, lanky fellow

Continued on page 23

g–j. These cabins, together comprising the poop cabin, are about 3' lower than the rest of the main deck. A wide but short stairway leads down from the main deck to the twin doors opening into the poop cabin.

g. Storage Cabins. The larger of these two cabins holds extra ropes, belaying pins, lamps, flags, and ammunition for the ship's weapons. The smaller cabin across from the galley holds food stores.

h. Officers' Quarters. These three cabins are home to the five officers of the ship (besides the captain): the first mate, the boatswain, the quartermaster, the mess steward, and the master armorer. With the PCs aboard, the officers crowd into two of these cabins, leaving the forwardmost cabin for the PCs' use. Melthos, Farco, and Dovell are in the larger cabin at the aft, while Chenit and Comek are in the middle cabin.

i. Galley. The mess steward, Chenit, prepares food for the crew in this cramped cabin. Food is served on the main deck, and most crewmembers eat at their stations. The ship's daily schedule allows two hours for the 232 rowers to get their lunch, which is the worst time of poor Chenit's frustrated existence.

j. Captain's Quarters. Arkos Seatamer has a large private cabin, which serves as both bedroom and office. The door is always locked. The captain's bed is in the aftmost part of the cabin. The ship's navigational charts and log are on a desk in the port corner of the cabin. The desk faces the cabin door; underneath the chair behind the desk is a trap door. The trap door is not hard to spot (4-in-6 chance) if a PC is actively looking for it, but otherwise it usually escapes notice. (There is a 1-in-6 chance to notice it accidentally, 2-in-6 for elves and half-elves.)

The trap door leads to a ladder down into a tiny crawlspace between the hull of the ship and the gathering room (area **m**). A secret door leads from that space into area **m,** while another door leads out through the hull to the sea. (The door is watertight and opens out above the waterline.) A trap door in the floor there opens into the cargo hold; a coil of rope in the crawlspace allows the captain to climb down into the hold.

with a patch over his right eye where a pirate's trained parrot pecked him. He climbs ropes like a monkey. **Balkid** is a red-haired half-elf. He's a jovial fellow, if a bit loud with his off-color jokes. **Thurmin** is a peasant boy who left his parents' farm to go to sea. He is cynical and morose, often sarcastic, and this is his first voyage. Melthos hired him because he could see the lad's good heart.

Dovell, Quartermaster: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2; ML 10.

Dovell is a robust man of middle age. He tends to his work—maintaining the ship's tiller, compasses, lamps, and flags—with a potentially irritating fastidiousness, keeping everything spotless and in perfect working order. Though he is strong (S 16) and hardy, he hates fights (they're too messy!) and avoids combat when possible. He has a long brown mustachio that he keeps meticulously groomed, though other aspects of personal hygiene are neglected while aboard ship.

Chenit, Mess Steward: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; ML 10.

Chenit is resigned to an impossible task: satisfying the appetites of 247 sailors with meager supplies, minimal equipment, and no assistant. Somewhere deep in his heart is a gourmet chef, but opportunities for that kind of work are few and far-between, and instead Chenit is forced to serve tasteless slop three times a day, and it makes him a bitter man. He speaks little, responds to the crew's good-natured ribbing with haughty disdain, but manages to get his job done with breathtaking efficiency.

Comek, Master Armorer: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; F3; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2; ML 10.

As the man responsible for the ship's weaponry—both heavy weapons and the arms carried by the sailors in battle—Comek is a hard and often violent man. At heart, he is lawful good, but he is also cursed with a bit of a temper and blessed with substantial brawn (S 17) to back it up. Though he carries a cutlass at all times, he prefers to fight bare-handed if it's practical. Comek is completely hairless, his tanned skin glistening with sweat and oil over his huge muscles. He wears only breeches and a vest, preferring to show off his chest and arms.

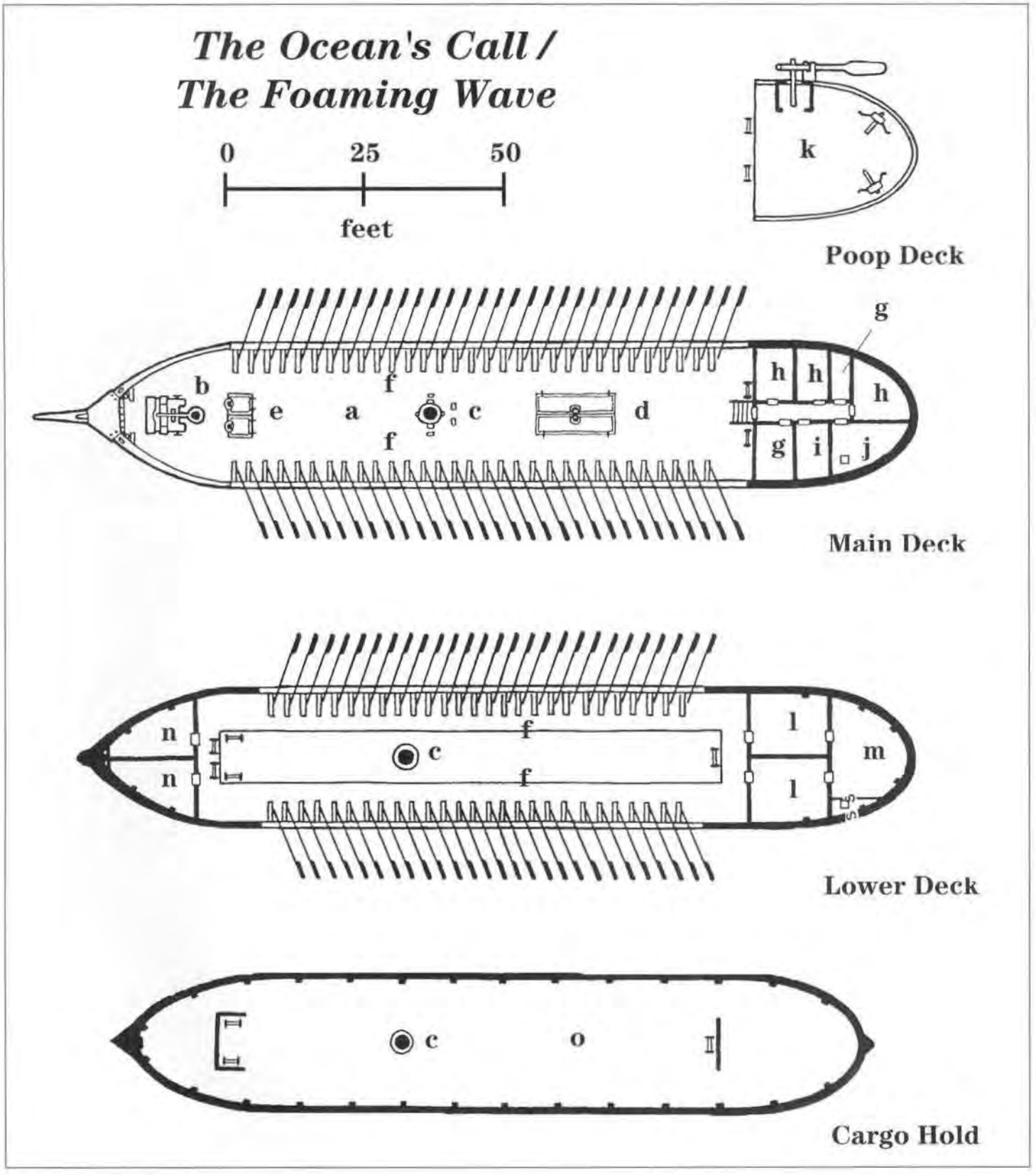
Comek has two armorer's mates helping him in his work. **Dorvi** is an oddity—a seafaring dwarf. He has never overcome his fear of the ocean but is fascinated with the sails and machinery of a ship, and he is an expert on ship's armament. **Estelna** is a small, wiry woman who somehow manages to fit in as "one of the guys" aboard ship. She's a master with the cutlass and spends much of here time training the other sailors in its use.

Four lookouts round out the crew of the *Ocean's Call*. **Bortin** is a quick-witted fellow who drinks too much for his position. **Freldon** is almost the opposite—dour and serious, puritanical and devoted to his work. **Markan** wishes he could find work as a minstrel, and he often entertains the crewmembers with songs and stories. (Unfortunately, his fellow crewmembers laugh at all the wrong lines.) **Sedi** is a petite woman with vision like an eagle's, who has not managed to fit as comfortably among the men of the crew as Estelna. She is shy and keeps to herself most of the time.

The ship is rowed by 232 oarsmen. If the PCs decide to interact with some of these men, their personalities can be invented or generated randomly, at the DM's discretion. All of them are good at heart and share the captain's zeal for waging war on pirates.

k. Poopdeck. Twin ladders on either side of the stairs lead to the poopdeck. The tiller is here, where Melthos steers the ship under sail, surrounded by a protective wall to keep him safe from the elements and stray missiles. Two ballistae are mounted on swivel joints aft of the poopdeck. They can each fire in an 90° arc.

l. Crew Quarters. Nine crewmen (three bosun's mates, two armorer's mates, and four lookouts) share these two cabins. Hammocks are slung along the walls, and personal effects are neatly arranged in the cabins. The ceilings in these cabins are low—barely 6 feet—so taller characters are not able to stand up straight.


The Ocean's Call /
The Foaming Wave
0
25
50
feet
k
Poop Deck
g
h
h
h
b
f
e
a
c
d
f
g
i
j
Main Deck
n
n
f
c
f
l
l
m
Lower Deck
c
o
Cargo Hold

m. Gathering Room. The crew relaxes and socializes in this cabin. There are tables and chairs, dice and cards, and a keg of watered-down wine here. Two or three off-duty sailors can usually be found here during the day. The ceiling here is low, as in area **l.**

There is a secret door in the port wall leading to the captain's secret passage. The cabin is shaped to conceal the presence of the crawlspace. The secret door cannot be opened from within this room, only from the other side.

n. Additional Cargo Space. These two cabins are empty, as the *Ocean's Call* is currently carrying no cargo.

o. Cargo Hold. Though the ship is without cargo at this time, the hold has various items of interest scattered around it, as well as many sacks of sand for ballast. Extra oars, a spare sail, ammunition for the catapult and ballistae, coils of rope, and a store of cutlasses, crossbows, bolts, and daggers can be found in the hold. The captain also keeps a spare set of clothes hidden in the aft part of the hold.

Characters searching the hold for anything unusual have a 4-in-6 chance of finding the clothes. In addition, there is a stowaway hiding in the cargo hold. Gelik (see "The Third Day" on page 28) is very good at remaining concealed in the hold, having a 4-in-6 chance to avoid detection by PCs, even if they are carefully searching the hold.

The Journey

The travel time to the shipwrecks must be determined based where the DM locates the site. Ideally, the voyage should take approximately two and a half days. The galley travels on a schedule of two hours of sailing (at 3 mph) then 5 hours of rowing (at 6 mph), two more hours of sailing while the rowers eat lunch, then five hours of rowing and 2 more hours of sailing.

The sailors' day begins at 5 A.M. and ends at 9 P.M. At this pace, they cover 78 miles in a day's journey. The PCs should arrive at their destination in the afternoon of the third day.

Day One

The *Ocean's Call* embarks at 5:00 A.M. Read the following:

> Just as the sun appears over the horizon, you find your way to the docks. There it is—the *Ocean's Call*. It is an impressive ship, with two banks of oars and a huge square sail. The crew is working feverishly to ready the ship before dawn. The sailors and rowers sound like an agreeable lot, although many of them seem quite young. Soon you are aboard and ready to embark, the sun filling the sky with a dazzling golden radiance.

Observant PCs (or any characters with the keen hearing trait from the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Skills & Powers* book) hear Melthos say, "We can't wait for him any longer," before issuing the command to move: "Let's go! Five beats!" If the PCs question him, he explains that the cook's assistant, a man named Felthin, spent the night in port and did not report for duty this morning. "Probably got cold feet," Melthos suggests, shaking his head. The truth is that Felthin was alone in the galley during the night and fell victim to the captain's insatiable hunger.

> The cries of gulls and a mild, salty breeze send you on your way. Over two hundred men pull on the hundred-odd oars, setting the ship off at a slow pace. The members of the crew all have a job to do, and they move around you in a hurried bustle, obviously excited to be setting out. The captain stands on the poopdeck, clearly in his element, appearing even more noble and dignified than he did yesterday as he guides the pilot and plots the ship's course.
>
> The sea beneath you is a smooth green sheet of water, motionless but for the splash of the oars as they hit the water in unison. With each stroke, the ship lurches slightly forward. A constant rhythmic rocking accompanies the beat of a huge kettle drum. The sky above is a brilliant blue, with barely a cloud in sight.
>
> Farco, the boatswain you met in port, takes you to your quarters—a fairly spacious room at the front of the poop cabin. "Now, you be sure to let me know if there's anything you need, understand? No guest on this ship is going to want for anything if I have any say in it!"

There are no random encounters during the journey, just the planned encounters described below. If the PCs wish to explore the ship, they may do so freely, but they always find the door to the captain's cabin (area **j**) locked.

The PCs may interact freely with the crew, though most of the sailors are busy with their tasks aboard the ship. See the sidebar for personality notes on each crew member. If the PCs seek out the cook (Chenit) during the first two hours of the journey, they find him diligently scrubbing the galley, a bucket of brownish-red sea water beside him. Chenit is cleaning up Felthin's blood, spattered in the galley when the were-eel killed him the night before. The cook thinks the blood is from the fish that Felthin packed yesterday evening, which he must have neglected to clean up before he hurried ashore to see his cousin. A successful Intelligence (or Intelligence/Reason) check among the PCs allows a character to notice what looks like a tiny scrap of green cloth stuck in some of the blood. Chenit is feeling very hassled and pressed for time with this unexpected clean-up job eating into his morning, so he is particularly abrupt with the characters, and hurries them out of his kitchen.

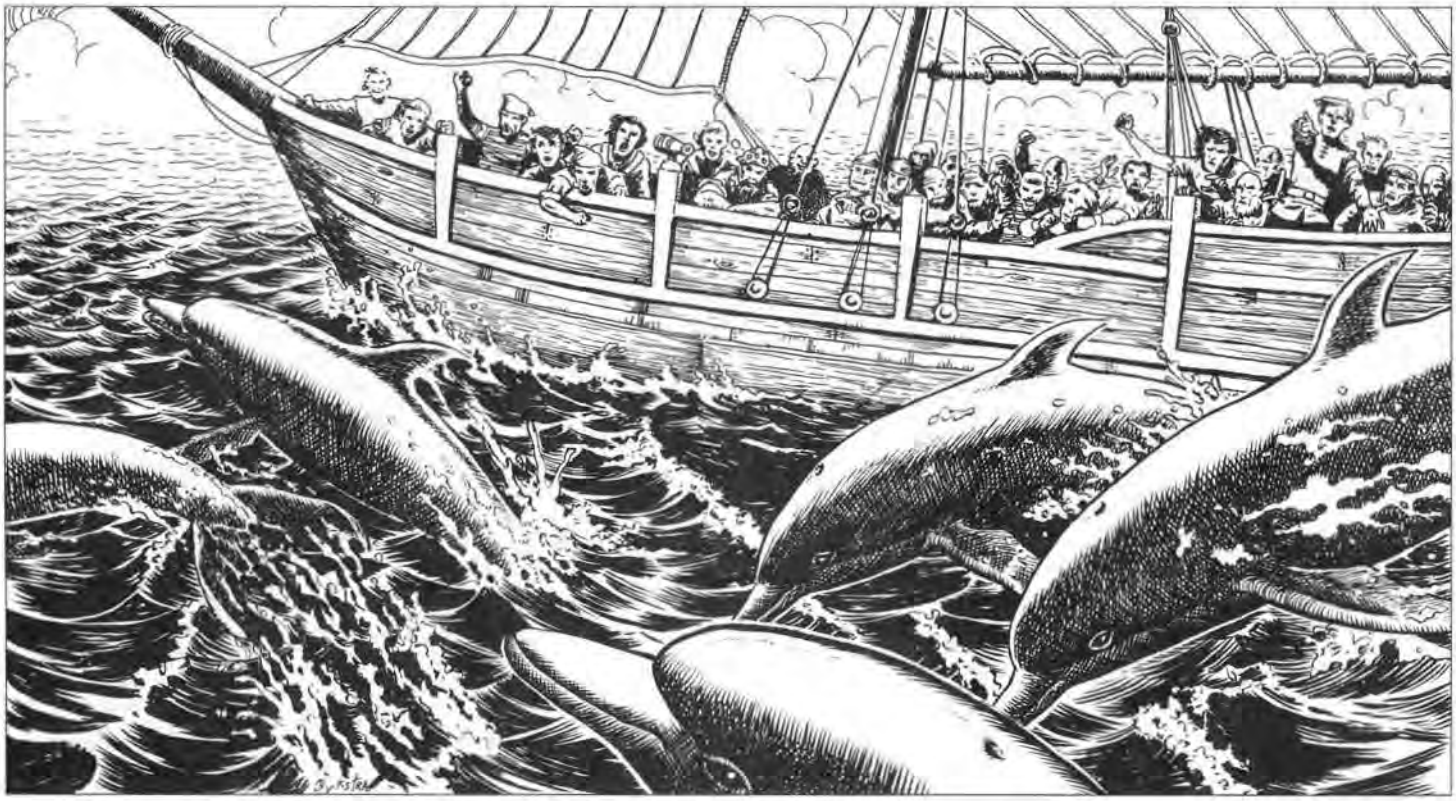
If the PCs spend time in the gathering room (area **m**) during the day, they may hear stories that they missed in town. If the characters did not hear either the "the deck was washed with blood" story or the fantastic account of how the *Foaming Wave* sank ("a foul creature of the deep"), they may hear either one (50% chance for each) from an off-duty sailor.

If the PCs asked a lot of questions in the city and heard both tales, Estelna (one of the armorer's mates) tells a new story. Read the following to the players:

> A small, wiry woman sits back in a chair with her feet on a crate, running a whetstone along the blade of her cutlass. "So, heroes," she says, "have you heard of Kirella Shadowgale before? The pirate queen our captain killed?"

If the PCs are native to the port city in which the adventure began, they have heard her name before but no details about her personality or her career. Estelna happily fills in the gaps in their knowledge:

> "Kirella Shadowgale was the most dreaded pirate these parts have ever



known. At the sight of her ship, any merchant vessel would set her course the other way and leave quite a wake behind her. Never mattered, though. They say Shadowgale had the winds on her side—she captained a caravel. No oars, you know, but she could maneuver that ship like a rowboat. And fast, too!

"When Shadowgale's ship caught up with her prey, the captain herself would lead the boarding. They say she could leap from her ship to the other with fifty feet still between them. Once she got on the merchant's decks, it'd be like she sniffed out the goods—she'd cut a path through the crew 'til she got to the gold. That's what she liked: gold. Nothing could stop her from getting it.

"They say she was a beautiful woman, tall and elegant, with long black hair and flawless tan skin. She wielded a cutlass like she was born with it in her hand. Swam like a fish, too, and they say she could hold her breath as long as a dolphin.

"But that was before our captain ran her through," she grins.

Estelna's stories about Kirella Shadowgale all have at least some basis in fact. The golden eel armband did give the pirate captain magical abilities, including the ability to *jump, control winds, breathe water,* and *detect gold.*

Later in the day, when the PCs are on deck, there is one more brief and pleasant encounter. Around 3:00 P.M. the lookout at the prow calls out to the nearby sailors:

"Hey, look at this!" He laughs as he points into the water.

"Is this another one of your stupid pranks, Markan?" asks a dour lad, one of Farco's mates.

"Shut up and look for yourself, Thurmin," the jovial lookout replies. Thurmin cautiously peers over the prow, and in an instant his cynicism melts away. "Never saw anything like that out on the farms, now did you?" Markan jabs at him. Thurmin doesn't reply, his mouth hanging open in wonder as he leans out over the gunwale for a better view.

Looking into the water yourselves, you witness an amazing sight: dolphins swim back and forth across the bow, easily keeping pace with the ship, leaping out of the water in delight at their game. They seem to be trying to come as close as possible to the ship's ram without being hit by it, and they put on a masterful performance. Even Thurmin can't help but laugh.

The dolphins lift the already high spirits of the crew, and by the time the ship anchors (at 9:00 P.M.), a festive atmosphere prevails aboard. Even the exhausted rowers speak cheerfully of the days ahead, looking forward with anticipation to their first battle with a pirate and the chance to see Arkos Seatamer do what he does best.

The First Night

Arkos retires at about 9:00 P.M. and reads in his cabin for two hours, trying to keep his mind off his gnawing hunger. Around 11:00 P.M., he succumbs to temptation. Soundlessly, he transforms into his hybrid form and slips out the trap door in his cabin, entering the water without a splash and assuming his giant eel form. He circles the ship, ramming it to strike terror into the hearts of the sailors aboard. Read the following description to the players:

A loud splashing sound off the starboard side of the ship draws the attention of nearby crewmembers.

Peering into the darkness beyond the reach of the lanterns' feeble light, they strain to see what could have made such a sound. With the captain asleep, young Thurmin calls for Melthos, the first mate.

Melthos arrives in haste. As he hurries toward the gunwale, something large rams into the ship, causing a booming thud to reverberate in the hold below. The whole ship rocks with the force of the impact, and poor Thurmin tumbles overboard!

Thurmin flails in the water for one round—he is not a good swimmer, coming from a farming family. In the torchlight, it is possible to see his arms splashing over the waves, his head turning frantically around as he looks for the source of the ramming. The PCs can take any actions they wish during that round. In the next round (roll initiative normally if necessary), the eel attacks Thurmin, who is AC 10 and has 6 hp.

It is impossible with normal vision to penetrate the darkness of the ocean water. Using infravision would require extinguishing the lanterns on deck (or at least moving them all to the port side), which makes the crew uncomfortable but is possible. Infravision reveals only the faintest image of a snake-like shape about 12' long. It is difficult to see accurately, being very close to the same temperature as the surrounding water.

The best way to see into the water is by dropping a magical light into the water, or casting a *light* spell on the water itself (remember that the radius of illumination for magical *light* spells is half normal underwater). The DM may choose to have Melthos carry a gemstone with a *continual light* spell cast on it. Beneath the water, the light no longer reflects off the surface, and a long, dark shadow flits along the edge of the illuminated sphere. Arkos avoids the light but might enter the radius of illumination long enough to gulp down the light source, if it is an object and not the water itself.

After this, Arkos shifts to his hybrid form and climbs back into his cabin within five rounds. During this time, Melthos runs to the captain's cabin and pounds on the locked door, to no avail. Unable to make the obvious connection, Melthos invents an excuse for the captain in his mind—"He worked so hard to untangle the ropes and sails this morning, he is sleeping very soundly"—and returns to the deck. Melthos does not tell anyone that the captain did not answer the door. He orders the sailors to post watches on every deck and both sides of the vessel, and he asks the PCs if they will help keep watch through the night. If PCs decide after this to break into the captain's cabin, they find him sound asleep in his bunk.

The Second Day

Another full day of travel awaits the crew of the *Ocean's Call*. All available crew members continue to stand watch on the decks throughout the morning. At noon, the captain orders them to rest, saying that last night's danger seems to have passed.

If the PCs question Arkos Seatamer about his whereabouts during the previous night, he claims simply to have slept through the whole thing. Melthos confirms the captain's story, saying he was asleep when Melthos came to get him after the attack.

If the PCs question Arkos about the giant eel-monster, read the following to the players:

The captain pauses, then sighs. "It's stalking me! I can't get rid of the thing." He shakes his head, looking down, then turns his gaze back on you.

"Since my battle with the *Striking Shadow*, that thing has been after me. That's why I've hired you, honestly. The golden armband I asked you to recover—the captain of the *Striking Shadow* wore it. I can only think that when she died, that armband somehow caused this eel-beast to seek revenge on me. I hope and pray that getting the armband will allow me to stop the thing's attacks before it devours my whole crew!"

Arkos is lying, of course, hoping to put the PCs off his scent. The PCs should be reminded as often as necessary—by the crew, especially Melthos—of Arkos' blameless reputation as a paladin of the highest caliber.

The Second Night

Near midnight, the captain's metamorphosis occurs again, in the same manner as the first night. It is possible that suspicious PCs already want to keep their eyes on Arkos Seatamer. It is important to remember the crew's absolute trust and loyalty to the captain they consider a hero. If the PCs are openly suspicious of the captain, the crew grow resentful. If the PCs try to set a watch on the captain, they'll be asking for a fight. The captain himself also resents any intrusion into his privacy or freedom, and he reminds the PCs that he has hired them. Whatever it takes, it is important to make sure Arkos is out from under their watchful eyes by midnight. The following event description relies on the captain retaining his privacy, though the DM may alter the course of events as necessary if the PCs keep him under guard (remember his secret hatch to the cargo hold and outside the ship).

Instead of circling in eel form this time, the captain remains in his hybrid form and climbs right back aboard the ship. In moments, one of the lookouts on deck utters a pained gasp, which is followed by a loud splash. If the PCs are on deck, they witness the attack, which lasts only two rounds. Read the following description to the players in this case:

A movement on the poopdeck catches your eye. Almost too quickly to register in your mind, a hulking humanoid form appears upon the rails in front of Estelna, standing watch at the stern. A monstrous, fish-like head is set atop the creature's massive shoulders and well-muscled, human arms. A long, lashing tail protrudes from its spine, and fins run down its calves to its flipper-like feet. In an instant, it lashes out with its gaping maw and sinks hundreds of needle-sharp teeth into Estelna's neck, even as she strikes at the thing with her cutlass. Her blade cuts through the creature's tiny scales but barely leaves a mark.

If the PCs have previously stated that they were on the poopdeck with missile weapons at the ready, they may attack the were-eel—though unless the weapons are magical or tipped with coral, they are not likely to do much harm. In the next round, the beast plummets overboard with Estelna in its grasp, landing in the water with a loud splash. In round three, Arkos changes form underneath the ship. Characters peering overboard in the light from the ship may see Estelna flailing about in the water, thrashing about in fear and pain—but no

Movement, Vision, and Combat Underwater

Movement rates (*PHB*, chapter 14):

❖ Swimming proficiency: swim at half land movement rate, with successful check against half Strength (Stamina): double speed.

❖ Heavily encumbered, metal armor, nonproficient: walk on sea bottom at one-third movement rate.

❖ Dive 20' in a round, +2' per encumbrance category above unencumbered.

❖ Surface 20' per round, –2' per encumbrance category above unencumbered.

Vision (*DMG*, chapter 9):

❖ In shipwrecks, 50'-range of vision.

❖ In coral reef, 70'-range of vision.

❖ Mud from sea floor acts as *darkness* spell (reverse of *light*).

❖ Night makes vision impossible.

❖ *Light* spells have half normal radius.

Combat (*DMG*, chapter 9; *Combat & Tactics*, chapter 3):

❖ Only type P weapons (and nets) may be effectively used in combat underwater.

❖ Specially-made crossbows are the only missile weapons that function; range is half.

❖ PCs –4 to initiative in melee (or two-phase penalty).

❖ PCs suffer –4 to attack rolls.

Spells: see *DMG*, chapter 9, and *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*, pg. 73.

sign of the were-eel. In the fourth round, the giant eel engulfs Estelna, and the unfortunate woman disappears completely. See the sidebar for Arkos' statistics in his were-eel forms.

Five rounds after the attack, Arkos returns to the ship, climbing silently back into the captain's cabin, reverting to human form and falling asleep. If PCs are in his cabin at this time (having picked the lock or broken the door down), he instead reverts to human form in the crawlspace, enters the cargo hold, changes into his spare set of clothes, and moves abovedeck to speak with the crew. He is seen by the stowaway, Gelik.

The crew goes into a panic after the attack, and Melthos sets about trying to calm them down. This time Melthos does not even knock on the captain's door, unless a PC suggests it. In that case, Melthos agrees to try waking the captain but reminds the PCs that the captain cannot swim well and suggests that they should take care of the monster.

The Third Day

At 9:00 A.M., a stowaway is discovered on board. If the PCs are on the main deck, read the following:

> Comek, the ship's master armorer, appears on the main deck with an unconscious human form draped over his broad shoulders. As he drops the man onto the deck, a circle of crew members has already gathered around him, curious looks on every face. "A stowaway!" he announces fiercely. "I found him in the cargo hold. Where's the captain?"
>
> The captain makes his way through the crowd of sailors, who respectfully clear a path for him. Reaching Comek's side, he looks down at the stowaway, now groggily moving his head and trying to open his eyes. The man is dark-haired and swarthy, with a full beard and bushy eyebrows. Comek explains, "Captain, I found this man in the cargo hold. He tried to get away from me, but I knocked him out. He should be coming to any minute."
>
> The captain steps forward and bends down to the man's level. "Can you hear me, friend?" he asks gently. The man's eyelids flutter open, and he looks around him. "You were stowing away on my ship. Would you care to explain?"
>
> The man coughs, feebly spitting some blood out of his mouth. "Please, sir, have mercy."
>
> "Tell me why you're on my ship," the captain prods, without raising his voice.
>
> "I was accused of stealing," the man explains hoarsely, "I'm innocent —I swear it! I never stole a thing in my life."
>
> "Except passage on my ship," the captain interjects with a wry smile.
>
> "I'm sorry! Mercy, captain. Mercy!"
>
> "Do you know who I am?" Arkos asks. The man nods. "Mercy you shall have. But not free passage. Melthos, take this man to Farco—he needs a new mate. Wait—best let him rest a bit first."
>
> Melthos offers a hearty, "Aye, sir!" and helps the man to his feet. The two soon disappear into the poop cabin.
>
> "Well, we're almost there," Arkos sighs in your direction. "This will all be over soon."

The PCs are free to question the stowaway once he has rested. His name is Gelik, and he's a native of the port city from which the *Ocean's Call* sailed. He was accused of stealing a rare and valuable gemstone (falsely, he insists) and felt the need to leave the city quickly, so he hid in the ship's hold during the night before she left port. He can offer one useful piece of information to the PCs, if they should ask the right question. If the PCs were in the captain's quarters after the attack last night, forcing the captain to go through the cargo hold to get abovedecks, Gelik saw him. The captain entered the hold naked through a small trap door in the ceiling, put on a new set of clothes, and went immediately back up through the main hatch.

In the afternoon of this day, the ship arrives at the shipwreck site.

Chapter Three: The Wrecks

The water is rough near the wrecks, and a strong wind is blowing. The *Ocean's Call* drops anchor, and Arkos distributes *potions of water breathing* to the PCs. He warns them that the effects last only an hour (or a little more), so they should be careful with their time (the *potion* duration, per dose, is 1 hour + 1d10 rounds). He has 12 doses of *potion* available in all (the DM may adjust this amount if the PCs are taking a long time to recover the body and the armband).

It is possible that the PCs may take more than a single day to recover the armband and the body from the shipwrecks. If they need healing beyond what they themselves can provide, Melthos can help with his laying on hands ability, curing 4 hp per day. In addition, Arkos has two *potions of extra-healing* that he lets the PCs use, at the cost of 50 gp per dose. The potions are very valuable to Arkos, especially since he has lost his healing abilities.

Be sure to review the information contained in the sidebar for a summary of rules relating to movement, vision, and combat underwater.

The *Ocean's Call* anchors to the west of the wreck site, as shown on the area map. Arkos knows that the wrecks are not far to the east, but he intentionally avoids anchoring right above the wrecks for fear of dropping the anchor through the hull of one of the wrecked ships.

As the PCs descend, they are too far away to see the wrecks through the murky water. Read the players the following description as they dive and approach the two ships:

> The warm water gently enfolds you as you leave the ship for the depths. You can feel the potion's effects in your lungs, making the air taste strange. The water flows into your body, and the oxygen courses into your blood.
>
> The sea is brilliant blue, the sunlight shimmering through the surface water. A school of tiny fish swarms like gnats around your heads as you descend, confused by your presence, almost making you dizzy with their darting movements. As you go deeper, the sunlight gradually fades. As the water presses against your inner ears, you become aware of hundreds of sounds — splashes, bubbles, scrapes, hums, songs. The water feels a little cooler, too, but it is refreshing after being in the hot sun on the ship's deck.

The PCs are near the area of the anchored ship on the map. The PCs may swim around before reaching the bottom. If they reach bottom at a sandy area, as opposed to the kelp bed or the coral reef (area **4**), read them the following description:

> You have reached the bottom of your dive, you'd guess about fifty feet below the surface now. The sunlight still filters down to the sandy ocean floor, though the shadow of the ship above blocks much of it. You can see 10' around you; beyond that, the darkness closes in. Small, strange plants dot the sandy landscape around you. The captain told you that the wrecks would be to the east from here.

Encounters in the reef/wreck area occur on a 3 or less on 1d10, checked twice an hour (or at the DM's whim). If an encounter is indicated, roll 2d4 and consult the encounter table on the previous page.

If the PCs remain in the area after sunset, assuming they have a magical light source, they are haunted by glimpses of a huge snake-like shadow (Arkos Seatamer in his eel form). The were-eel does not attack the PCs, because even in his beast form he knows that they are important to him. Each night, he circles near the wrecks, then comes back aboard the ship, cleverly circumventing any precautions the PCs or the crew may set in place, and feeds on a single crew member—ideally, someone the PCs have spoken to during the day.

Encounter Table (2d4)

2. Green Urchin: INT semi- (3); AL N; AC 3; MV 6, swim 6; HD 2+1; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–7; SZ S (3'); ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/354.

One PC notices a silvery glitter in the mud of the sea floor about 15' away. There seems to be some kind of metallic object in the mud, but on top of it is this green, spiny creature. The urchin attacks if the PCs come within 10 feet, firing its (non-poisonous) needles at these interlopers. If the urchin is defeated, the PCs may claim its internal gemstone (worth 360 gp), and they also find a silver *ring of sustenance* on a rapidly decomposing human hand, attached only to a forearm.

3. Shark: INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 24; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SZ M (5'+); ML 10; XP 120; *MM*/117.

If the PCs remain calm as the shark passes near, it does not attack unless they are bleeding freely but may (50% chance) circle and remain in the area for 1d3 turns. If the PCs move rapidly or are bleeding, the shark attacks. If blood is drawn in the battle, 1d4 additional sharks are lured to the area within 3d6 rounds.

4. Sea snake: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 15; HD 2+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type C); SZ S (5'); ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320 (snake, poisonous, normal).

This normal sea snake is not interested in attacking prey as large as the PCs, but it swims near them and defends itself if threatened.

5. Undertow. The presence of the cursed armband among the shipwrecks creates strange currents within the surrounding ocean. Each PC must make a swimming proficiency check or be caught in such a current and pulled 1d10×10 feet in a random direction. (Characters without the swimming proficiency who are walking on the sea bottom must make a Dexterity check instead.) Each character who is caught in the current should make a Dexterity check to avoid being pulled into some object—coral, rocks, or floating debris causing 1d4 hp damage.

6. Vision Obstruction. Something obscures the PCs' vision. This may be floating seaweed (which acts as dense brush on land; see the description for area **5**), a school of small fish reflecting light and completely obscuring vision within a 5' radius, an unexplained cloud of mud from the sea floor that acts as a *darkness* spell, or another obstruction of your devising.

7. Strangleweed (3d4): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 3; HD 2-4; THAC0 19 or 17; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA crushing; SZ L (7'–12'); ML 9; XP 120, 175, 270; *MM*/293 (plant, intelligent).

Distinct from the usual variety of strangleweed that floats on the surface, this species floats freely on the underwater currents and can maneuver itself slowly to get near prey. The weeds seem to drift gently toward the PCs and attack when they are within 1d6+6 feet of the PCs.

8. Large Octopus (1d3): INT animal; AL N; AC 9; MV swim 12; HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 7; Dmg 1–2 (×6)/1–6; SA constrict for 1–4 hp/round; SD ink, camouflage; SZ M (4'–6'); ML 9; XP 270; *MM*/271 (octopus, giant).

Like their giant cousins, these creatures are capable of attacking large prey. While not large enough to attack a ship, they try to ambush the PCs by camouflaging themselves among seaweed or coral, where they are only 10% detectable. If the PCs approach within five feet, the monsters attack. Large octopi constrict their prey.

1. *Striking Shadow.* This is the wreck of the *Striking Shadow*, a caravel about 85' long and 20' wide. It lies keel-up on the sea floor, its upper decks sinking into the mud, its mast broken underneath it and sticking out to the northeast. The sails still cling to the

mast, billowing out in the currents and obscuring vision. A variety of predators in the reef area lurk around the sails, using them for concealment while waiting for prey to come near. Roll an extra encounter check as the PCs approach the ship. The billowing fabric of the sails gives the PCs a –1 penalty to their surprise rolls if there is an encounter here.

2. *Striking Shadow* Cargo Hold. The hull of the *Striking Shadow* has a huge hole in it made by the ram of the *Foaming Wave*. The hole opens into the large cargo hold of the ship and allows enough sunlight to filter in so the PCs can see ahead 30 feet. The overhead (what was once the ceiling of the hold), now underfoot, is littered with large crates, some smashed against the wood of the deck, others still intact. A few urchins and sea slugs inch along the wood of the crates and the hold itself, scavenging the algae that grows in a thin layer on everything. Schools of small fish pick at the flesh of several of the ship's crew. The crates contain various goods stolen from merchant ships in the area: brassware (worth about 200 gp for each of the three crates), glassware (shattered and worthless), iron pigs (blocks of metal being shipped from a smelter, worth 300 gp for each of the five crates), and wool (ruined by the water). Naturally, the brassware and iron would be extremely difficult to salvage, as each crate of brassware weighs 100 lbs. and each crate of iron weighs 300 lbs.

2a. *Striking Shadow* Poop Cabin. A hatch in the deck hangs open, leading to a tiny space between the deck and the muddy sea bottom, completely dark. Human bones, limbs, and bits of flesh jut from the mud of the sea floor at awkward angles, their decay souring the water in this enclosed area. Crawling through this space toward the aft of the ship brings one to the poop cabin, partially submerged in the mud. (The forecastle is completely buried in the mud and cannot be reached without digging.) The poop cabin (see the inset on the map) contains the captain's quarters as well as the galley and petty officers' quarters. The captain's cabin, at the far aft of the vessel, still contains Kirella Shadowgale's personal treasure from life. Locked in a small chest at the far end of the cabin is the sum of this treasure: 263 gp; three gems—bloodstone (50 gp), amethyst (100 gp), garnet (250 gp); a mother-of-pearl inlaid box (300 gp); and a scroll of *protection from water* in a waterproof bone scroll case.

If the characters enter the cargo hold of the pirate ship, the lacedon-ghast that was once Kirella Shadowgale watches them while lying in the mud of the sea floor. The PCs each have a 1-in-10 chance to notice her before entering the ship. Once they are inside, she moves to the entrance and observes them cautiously, remaining 80% hidden by the hull of the ship. If all of the PCs go through the hatch into the space below, Kirella swims quickly to the door and slams it shut, hoping to trap the characters inside and drown them so she can feed. In order to do this, however, she needs to reach her arm down through the hatch to grab the door and pull it closed. The PCs in the space below notice her arm if they make successful Wisdom (or Wisdom/Intuition) check and can prevent the door from closing by pushing a solid object through the hatch or attacking Kirella's arm. If foiled in this way, Kirella flees immediately, stirring up the mud of the sea floor as she leaves the ship, in effect casting a *darkness* spell outside the hole leading into the cargo hold, and darkening the inside of the vessel.

If one character is left in the hold to stand guard while the other PCs explore the cabin below, Kirella attempts a surprise attack on that character. She stirs up a cloud of mud at the entrance, dimming the sunlight that filters in, and uses that cover to swim in, swimming upward along the hull in a single round to approach the character from above. In the next round, she swims down at full speed for the attack. The ambushed character should roll for surprise. If the victim is not paralyzed by her first attack, Kirella flees in the next round of combat, perceived only as a humanoid shadow in the dark water, a blur of fangs and claws. If she paralyzes the PC, she attempts to trap the others as described above. If she succeeds in trapping the other characters, she carries off the paralyzed PC for her next meal.

See encounter area **4a** for Kirella's abilities.

If characters are trapped in the rear cabin area, escape is very difficult. Kirella pulls the trap door shut and runs a sturdy piece of oar through an iron loop set into the door, preventing the door from opening. A successful Strength (or Strength/Muscle) check on 1d4+13 (it's a very difficult task because of the small space below and the water resistance) allows a character to break the oar and open the door. The portholes in the cabin cannot be opened, but they can be broken (1 hp of damage is enough to shatter the glass), and the PCs could then dig through the mud—very slowly. The characters must dig through five feet of loose mud, which takes five rounds.

3. *Foaming Wave* Fore Portion. This is the wreck of Arkos' ship, the *Foaming Wave*, a great galley about 155' long and 25' wide. The ship was torn in two by the storm that sank it, and only the fore part lies here. Part of the mast lies on the sea floor beside the ship, still attached to the deck with ropes but blackened by fire. The rest of the mast, with the sail, has been carried away by the currents. Some oars still protrude from the hull; many are broken, and many more have washed away. Scraps of wood from the *Striking Shadow's* hull can be seen caught in the ram.

Most areas of the wrecked ship need little explanation. As the PCs explore, refer to the map of the *Ocean's Call*, since the *Foaming Wave* is almost identical to the newer ship. The ship is broken along the line running 15' forward of the poop cabin. The letters in parentheses below refer to the letters on the *Ocean's Call* map.

3a. Rowers' Benches (f). Both banks of rowers' benches lie exposed to the ocean. The corpses of the ship's rowers (120 of them, the other 12 lying in the aft portion) are still at their posts here, their flesh hanging off of them in little wisps, chewed by scavenging fish and in some cases savaged by sharks—or Kirella Shadowgale. There is a 2-in-6 chance of an encounter with a shark in the area.

3b. Captain's Cabin (n). The two cabins marked "**n**" on the map of the *Ocean's Call* are only one cabin in the *Foaming Wave*. This served as the captain's cabin on this ship. Its door swings open in the currents, and the dark cabin is filled with water. The cabin contains the ship's navigational instruments and log; the log is illegible due to water damage. As they explore the fore cabin and the navigational logs of the paladin's ship, Kirella Shadowgale appears in the doorway:

> A fetid stench permeates the water. Turning instinctively toward the doorway, you see an elegant human woman, standing nearly six feet tall, with noble features and well-developed muscles. Her skin is richly tan, her billowing hair black, her clothes rich and comfortable though clinging to her skin in the water. She smiles, revealing disturbingly sharp teeth, and extends a hand graced with long, polished nails. "Welcome," comes a voice that needs no air. Her other hand appears from behind her back, holding a long bone, little bits of flesh still clinging to it. Still smiling, she brings the bone to her mouth and wraps her long tongue around it, scraping off the flesh with its rough protrusions. She grins and crouches, flexing every perfect muscle, then she jumps and disappears from the doorway.

The characters are sure to be shocked and horrified, and the players should be encouraged to roleplay accordingly. If the characters attempt to follow her, they find themselves blinded by a mud cloud, effectively plunging a 10' radius sphere into darkness.

3c. Cargo Hold (o). A portion of the *Foaming Wave's* treasure lies in this part of the hold. Six large crates packed with fine cloth are strapped to the hull; the cloth is now ruined by the seawater. The rest of the ship's treasure is in the aft portion of the ship (area **4**).

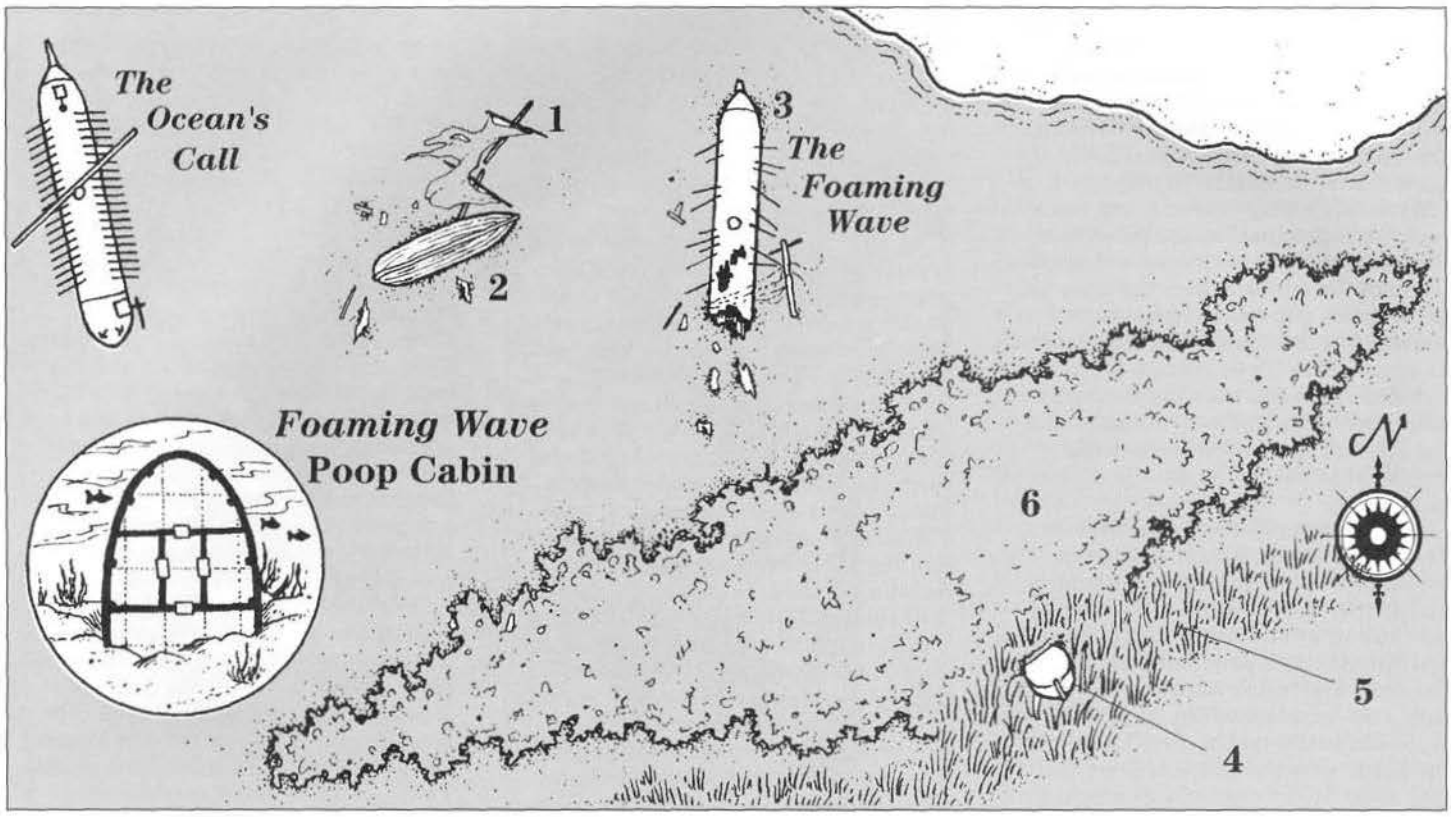
4. *Foaming Wave* Aft Portion. The aft portion of the *Foaming Wave* lies here, its stern pointing straight up, almost totally concealed by the kelp bed. An air bubble in the far aft cabin of the lower deck (area **4e**) keeps the vessel at this precarious angle. This portion of the ship is about 45' long, so that it reaches from the sea floor to within 10 feet of the surface, but it is concealed by heavy kelp growth. The forward end of the wreck has sunk five feet into the mud with the continuous rocking of the vessel in the current.

Again, refer to the map of the *Ocean's Call* as the PCs explore this part of the ship. The *Foaming Wave* lacks the secret passage from the captain's cabin but is otherwise identical to the newer ship. This portion of the ship consists of the poop cabin and about 15 feet of decks fore of it.

4a. Upper Deck and Rower's Benches (a–f). The main deck holds the upper bank of oars, as on the *Ocean's Call*. The corpses of 16 rowers hang on their benches or sprawl in the mud below. There is a small hole (3' in diameter) in the deck right at the level of the sea floor, leading into the hold below. Lying in the mud amidst the benches and corpses is the golden eel armband. A successful Wisdom (or Wisdom/Intuition) check allows a PC to spot the armband in the mud.

The armband is made of gold and shaped like a coiled eel, designed to wrap around the upper arm. The armband allows the wearer to cast *water breathing* and *jump* at will, as a 5th-level wizard. Once per day, the wearer can *control winds* as a 9th-level priest. The wearer can *detect gold* within 10 feet at will, pinpointing its exact location. The wearer is also consumed by lust for that gold, however, and is driven to steal it or take it by force if necessary. A successful saving throw vs. paralyzation allows the PC to resist this drive.

Anyone who beholds the armband is possessed by a similar but weaker avarice. A saving throw vs. paralyzation is allowed to avoid the burning desire to possess it. If the character fails his save, how he acts on this powerful drive is completely within the player's control—the PC is not forced to try to steal the armband or seize it from another character. A PC who behaves contrary to alignment by stealing the armband or committing acts of violence against compatriots should be considered to have changed alignment voluntarily and suffers the appropriate consequences. The magic of the armband seduced Arkos toward evil, but he was already on the way there and willingly took the plunge over the edge. He was not coerced into killing Devek Harpwind and suffered the full consequences of his action. Players who use the magic of the armband as an excuse for evil acts need to be reminded that they are still responsible for their characters' actions.



When the PCs discover the armband, the lacedon-ghast appears and tries to wrest it from them. Kirella attacks in blind fury, shrieking, "No! It's mine! Give it to me!" and attacking the character who holds it. This time she fights to the death, unless she can grab the item and escape with it.

Kirella Shadowgale (lacedon-ghast): INT very; AL CE; AC 4; MV swim 12; HD 4; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/1–8; SA paralyzation, stench (+2 to saves); SD immune to *sleep, charm;* SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; XP 975; *MM*/131.

4b. Rear Cabins (g–j). A wide stairway down to two doors leads into the rear cabins of the sterncastle. The cabins follow the same arrangement as those on the *Ocean's Call,* except that no trap door leads from the captain's cabin on this ship. The kelp has worked its way into all seven of these cabins and covers the walls, floor, and ceiling. Hammocks float in the water, and miscellaneous personal items can be found among the seaweed. If the PCs did not encounter weed eels in area **5,** they should find 1–4 eels in these cabins. See area **5** for the eels' statistics.

4c. Poop Deck (k). Twin ballistae are mounted on the poopdeck, rusting and covered with algae. The tiller is overgrown with kelp but otherwise empty.

4d. Lower Rower's Benches (f). A hole in the main deck at the level of the sea floor leads below to the lower rowers' benches. The corpses of eight more rowers lie hanging on the benches and piled on the muddy sea floor. Their oars still dangle out the sides of the ship, and the oar-holes have admitted all sorts of scavengers in to feed on their flesh. Small crabs, in particular, climb all over the corpses, giving an impression of movement. A single giant crab lairs in this room, usually buried to the eyestalks in the bottom mud. The crab much prefers fresh meat to carrion and attacks the PCs (with a –3 penalty to their surprise roll) when they come within 5 feet.

Giant crab: INT non-; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/2–8; SD –3 to opponents' surprise roll; SZ L (9'); ML 13; XP 65; *MM*/50.

The crab has no treasure, but if brought to the surface and packed promptly, its shell and its meat could bring as much as 50 gp.

4e. Aft Cabin (l–m). A door to the aft of the rowers' benches leads to the large air-filled cabin. (The *Foaming Wave* has only one cabin here, where the *Ocean's Call* has three.) Opening the door does not cause the room to fill with water, since the air has nowhere to go. Six portholes in the cabin, tightly sealed, keep the air in; breaking any of them causes the room to flood as the air streams toward the surface in a rush of bubbles. (This also causes the ship to tip over, as the buoyancy of the air bubble no longer holds it at this odd angle.) Devek's body lies on the "floor" (the fore wall), with a light bed over it, propped between the wall and the ceiling of the cabin. As the PCs enter the cabin, they witness a strange and horrifying sight:

> A faintly-glowing image of the man whose body is slumped on the wall seems to sit on the actual cabin floor—defying gravity by sitting on what is now a wall. Propping himself weakly up with one arm, and with the other clutching his stomach that oozes forth a constant flow of blood, the image speaks in a hollow voice:

"If golden eel shall be my doom,
Then eel indeed you shall become.
Until some fair amends you make,
Each night eel's form you'll take
Or prowl as monster up above
And prey once more on those you Love.
But lay me by my mother's grave,
And then perhaps your soul you'll Save."

The gaze of the image is firmly locked on the middle of the cabin (where Arkos Seatamer stood as he killed Kirella Shadowgale), but nothing is visible there now. After speaking the words of his curse, the image collapses on the floor and slowly fades away. After two rounds, however, it reappears, and the scene is repeated eternally.

The image is a phantom, repeating the dying words of Devek Harpwind as condemnation of Arkos' heinous crime. This is the most important warning that Arkos cannot be entirely trusted and that there is more going on here than meets the eye. Devek's curse suggests something of the evil power of the armband as well. Because this information is so crucial to the adventure, the DM should ignore or limit the possible fear effects of viewing the phantom—though the PCs should not want to stand in the room to hear the curse repeated four times!

Phantom: INT nil; AL N; AC nil; MV 9; HD nil; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA fear; MR special; SZ M (6'); ML nil; XP nil; *MM*/287.

4f. Cargo Hold (o). Between the lower rows of benches, the deck opens up to provide access to the cargo hold. Here, strapped to the hull and piled on the muddy ocean floor, are chests and crates containing the ship's treasure, fine goods recovered from pirate ships before they were sent to their watery resting place. Three small chests contain 1,100 sp, 200 gp, and 6 gems: sardonyx (50 gp), amber (100 gp), tiger eye agate (10 gp), jet (100 gp), amethyst (200 gp), malachite (10 gp). A crate of antiquities, once worth perhaps 5,000 gp, has been severely damaged, but even the broken items are valuable and some remain intact. The crate could now fetch 2,000 gp from an interested collector. Another crate contains fine wine, all the bottles miraculously unbroken, worth 15 gp for each of the 50 bottles (750 gp total).

5. Kelp Bed. A huge bed of kelp, with strands up to 50' long, totally conceals the aft portion of the ship here, as well as blocking vision in the area. Read the following description:

An aquatic forest rises before you. Leafy shafts of dark green and deep red ascend from the ocean floor almost to the surface, clustered so that it is difficult to see beyond them. Tiny fish dart among the huge leaves, and snails and sea slugs crawl over the plant surfaces.

Dense as the kelp is, it is possible to move through it. Movement is reduced to two-thirds of normal (swimming) speed, as characters must push the kelp out of the way or cut it. Characters and creatures within the kelp are considered to have 90% cover; missile attacks suffer a –4 attack roll penalty. There is a 2-in-6 chance of an encounter with 1–6 weed eels in the kelp bed.

Weed eels (1–6): INT non- ; AL N; AC 8; MV swim 9; HD 1–1; hp 1, 6, 4, 1, 4, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type F); SD camouflage; SZ M (6'); ML 6; XP 120; *MM*/117.

6. Coral Reef. A massive coral reef dominates this area of the ocean floor. Read the following:

Looming ahead of you is an eruption in the sea floor, a gigantic bulge that towers a good twenty feet above you. The sandy ocean floor at your feet is plain and bare, interrupted only occasionally by odd-looking weeds and plant-like creatures. The hillock before you is covered with unfamiliar objects, most of them seemingly, alive. Feather-like leaves stretch out toward you, moving and swaying in the current. A bright pink ball covered in wiggling tentacles lies in front of you. The scalloped mouth of a giant clam opens in the distance. Clusters of red and orange growths, tiny fish and lobsters crawling among them, cover a wide expanse. Swarms of tiny, brightly-colored fish dart here and there among the strange flora, and you can see the shadows of larger fish in the distance.

At night the scene is different, though tiny lantern-fish (visible as points of yellow light) and other nocturnal swimmers still prowl; also, some of the coral extends its tentacles. Unique to this area of the world is a nocturnal predatory coral large enough to catch and digest a human. It can lunge up to 6' to grab an unwary victim (–3 to surprise rolls) and otherwise acts like strangleweed. If the PCs explore the reef at night, they are attacked by one or more of these corals.

Predatory coral: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 0; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA crushing; SZ L (6'-long tentacles); ML 9; XP 175; *MM*/293 (strangleweed).

Chapter Four: Twin Curses

While the players are likely to think of the underwater exploration as the heart and the highlight of this adventure, the real challenge begins once they have completed their mission and returned to the *Ocean's Call*. This portion of the adventure requires some diplomacy, good problem-solving, and role playing. The PCs must sort through some ethical issues as well as practical ones, with the final twofold goal of breaking Devek Harpwind's curse (by laying his body to rest) and destroying the golden armband.

When the PCs bring the armband aboard, if it is visibly displayed, the old lust wells up in the depths of the captain's soul. If the PCs hand it over according to their contract, along with Devek Harpwind's body, they are released from their service, and he takes them back to their home port if they wish it. However, the PCs must realize by this point (from the phantom in the shipwreck, if nothing else) that Arkos is not all he seems to be, and they should think twice before simply handing the armband to him. If they try to hide it from him, he continues sending them on diving missions until they find it or they run out of potions. If they withhold it while letting him know they have it, he may try to steal it or even kill for it again. Should Arkos win possession of it, one way or another, he finally becomes everything he has always crusaded against, as the item works its corrupting influence on him.

If the PCs give the armband to Arkos, they notice a change in him almost immediately—a change for the worse. His characteristic smile vanishes the moment he puts the thing on. Where he was always cordial and polite before, he becomes sullen, brusque, and downright rude.

Arkos knows what he must do to

escape the curse, so he plans to head to the site of Devek's mother's grave when the body and the armband are both recovered from the shipwreck. This part of the journey is short enough that the PCs should be able to avoid another attack from the were-eel. If they do spend another night aboard the *Ocean's Call*, they run the risk of becoming a target for Arkos, having outlived their usefulness.

If the PCs keep the armband and confront Arkos about his lycanthropy, he slumps into a seat and wails, "You must help me break free of this curse!" He makes no attempt to deny that he is the were-eel, though he (falsely) insists he has no control over his actions or his transformation. He rationalizes that killing him is not the best option, since it would leave Devek unvindicated and only perpetuate the injustice. He pleads with the PCs to have mercy on him and help him in his quest to escape Devek's curse.

In the light of day and reason, Arkos is willing to submit to a PC-originated plan to lock him up at night to protect his crew (though he does not mention the trap door in his cabin). There is one major problem with any such plan to restrain the captain, however: if the crew learns that their captain is the foul monster who killed their companions, they quickly become an angry mob. If the captain is locked up, the crew is almost certain to get wind of it, and they suggest a more immediate solution to the problem: hanging him from a yardarm. (Such a situation would be a prime opportunity for bards and priests with the soothing word granted power to exercise their skills.) In such a situation, a skilled mediator, such as Melthos, is invaluable.

If the PCs confront the captain with his murder of Devek, he likewise admits his guilt. He does feel genuine remorse for the killing of his friend. While the curse can be lifted with relative ease, there is no such easy solution for his guilt. The PCs are encouraged to bring the captain to justice in their home port at the conclusion of the adventure. Arkos is sorry he killed his friend, and he knows that he deserves punishment, but he also feels that without him, piracy will flourish in the area as it did before he began his crusade. He tries to convince the PCs not to turn him in, but does not physically resist them provided that both his curses are broken.

Laid to Rest

Devek Harpwind was a good priest from a small, traditional community. He shared that community's no-nonsense, down-to-earth values. His mother's grave lies just outside his home town—a simple affair, a large rock serving as a crude tombstone, with the words, "Elesia Harpwind—Mother," crudely carved in the surface. There is no sign of a grave for "Father."

The cemetery in which Elesia is buried is a pastoral, peaceful place, the sort of cemetery that doesn't hint at the presence of undead, even on the darkest nights. Flowers grow throughout the area, birds sing in the trees, and small mammals can often be seen peering out from the nearby woods. It is a place that makes one think of death as a restful experience and soothes any fears that are brought with it.

Arkos arranges for an appropriately simple ceremony to lay Devek's shrouded body in the earth beside his mother. The village priest, belonging to the same order as both Devek and Arkos, officiates at the ceremony, and a handful of villagers attend, genuinely tearful but somehow celebrating as well. Arkos stands by the grave for a long time after the rest of the gathering has dispersed, apparently deep in thought. If the PCs stay nearby to wait for him, they have the opportunity to witness the breaking of the curse:

> The chirping of the birds in the trees seems somehow to grow quieter, then fade into hushed silence. A soft light gathers around the grave where Arkos is standing. A gentle breeze stirs the grass and rustles the leaves, and in the midst of the rustling comes a voice. It is a peaceful voice that seems to come out of the realms of dream, and though it comes from beyond the grave, there is nothing fearsome or unsettling about it. It says only two words, but they come as distinctly as if the speaker were standing right beside you: "Arkos, rest."
>
> Suddenly the captain slumps to the ground, his face relaxing, his breath coming easy and heavy. Arkos is asleep, probably for the first time in a month.

Devek Harpwind's curse upon his former companion is now ended; Arkos will never change into a were-eel again. He is still cursed, however, as long as the golden armband exists. Though well-rested by the time he awakes in the morning (nothing can awaken him until then), he remains sullen, short-tempered, suspicious, and rude if he has the armband, preoccupied with finding it if he does not have it yet. The only way to free him of that curse is to destroy the armband.

Concluding the Adventure

The golden armband is easy enough to destroy; it saves as any metal object with a +2 bonus to its saves. Acid, disintegration, or lightning are thus the methods most likely to succeed, though simply melting it in a hot fire works as well.

Arkos does not willingly hand over the armband once he has it. The PCs may remove it from him while he is in his deep sleep following the lifting of Devek's curse and promptly destroy it with no interference from him. Otherwise, he must be restrained to remove the armband from his arm.

Any character who has failed a save against the object's lust-inducing powers must make a successful Wisdom check, or else intervene to prevent the destruction of the armband. Again, the armband cannot force characters to act contrary to their alignments, so PCs should not use deadly force against each other. Arkos' willpower has been gradually eroded by the curse of the armband, so he automatically tries to stop the PCs if he is conscious. Arkos fights, if necessary, to prevent the armband's destruction.

If the armband is destroyed, failing its saving throw against whatever attack is used upon it, the magical forces contained in it are released in a manner similar to that of the retributive strike unleashed by some magical staves. A violent storm arises in the area, tossing ships about in the water. (A seaworthiness check is required for all vessels within a quarter mile.) Read the following to the players:

> The armband uncoils and writhes as if it were a live eel, but then the gold begins to melt and dissolve. As it softens into liquid, sparks of blue energy fly from it and disappear into the air. The wind gusts suddenly, throwing loose objects around, and soon walls are shaking and trees are bending under its force. Rain pelts you. Clouds that appeared from nowhere empty themselves as lightning flashes across the sky.

The PCs should be able to find secure shelter to keep them safe during the storm, but they are left shaken and exhausted as they survey the wreckage the storm leaves in its path.

It is in the midst of this wreckage that Arkos, if he is conscious, thanks the PCs profusely for putting an end to the armband's curse, freely answering any lingering questions they may yet have about the train of events leading up to this adventure. Arkos is willing to sail the PCs anywhere they wish to go, and he does anything else he can to help them on their way. Again, he is willing to go into custody to be legally tried for his crimes (he is still lawful, after all), but it is up to the PCs as to how they want to deal with this situation.

If the PCs successfully recover Devek Harpwind's body and the golden eel armband, they should receive a story goal award of 1,000 XP. If the PCs help Arkos lay Devek's body to rest, they earn an additional 500 XP, and if they destroy the armband, they receive another 500 XP bonus. The melted-down gold from the armband is worth only 50 gp. If the PCs manage to kill Arkos Seatamer, they receive the normal award for defeating him in combat, 420 XP. However, if he is brought to justice (tried in a court of law, where he will be punished for his crimes), the PCs receive an award of 500 XP. If Arkos escapes justice, he makes an excellent recurring villain (progressing farther down the road to corruption as time passes) in future adventures. Ω

Missing a few Dungeons?

Classic back issues of *Dungeon*® *Adventures* are available for a limited time only!

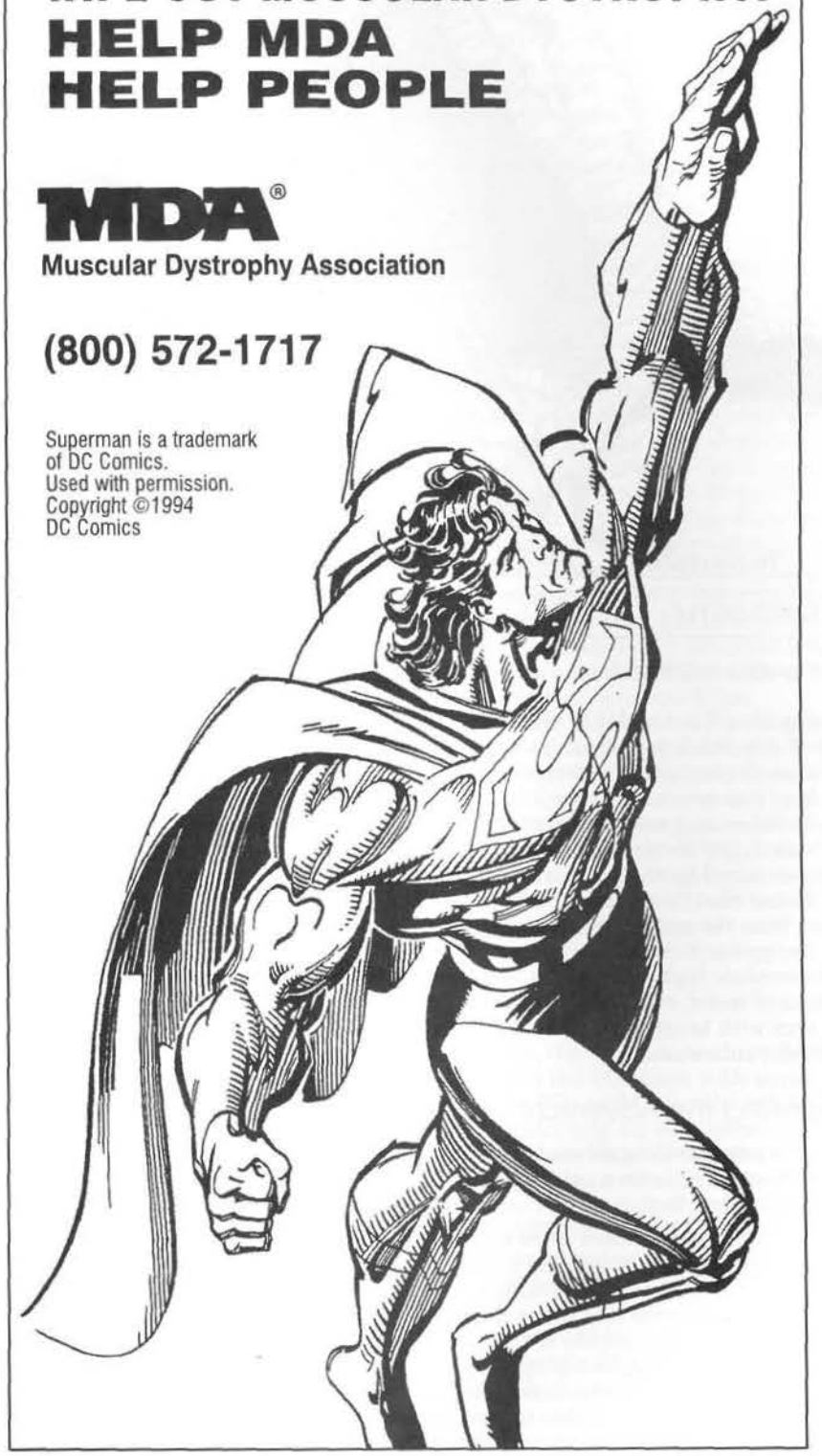
See page 57 for details.

VOLUNTEER
FOR THE FIGHT!
WIPE OUT MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY!
HELP MDA
HELP PEOPLE

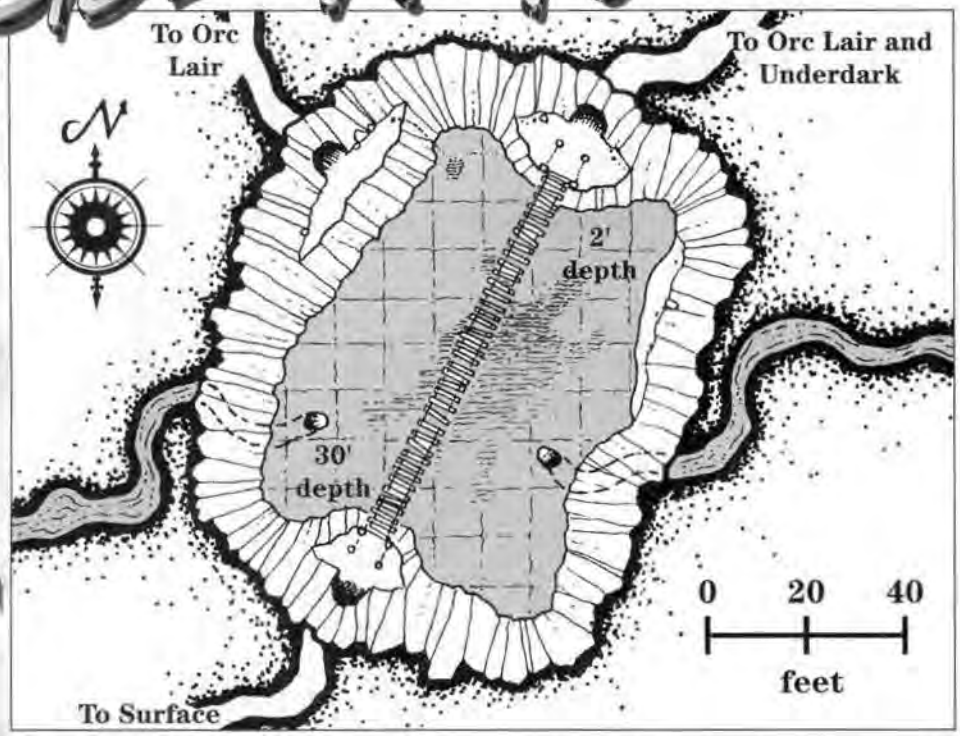
MDA®
Muscular Dystrophy Association

(800) 572-1717

Superman is a trademark of DC Comics. Used with permission. Copyright ©1994 DC Comics



SIDE TREKS



BY CHRIS DOYLE

Cartography by Diesel

"Swing Shot!" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure designed for a party of 3–5 characters of 4th–6th level (about 20 total levels). The encounter is set in an underground passage. It can easily be dropped into any existing campaign, while the party travels from one area to another. The ambush is suitable for use with the boxed set *Night Below* and can be located in the upper reaches of the Underdark (as detailed in Book 2, *The Perils of Underdark*). The orcs encountered here can actually be mercenaries hired by the kuo-toa of the City of the Glass Pool to guard the passage.

"Swing Shot!" can also be used for lower level PCs by removing key magical items from the opposition, reducing the number of creatures encountered, or replacing the orcs with kobolds or goblins. Alternatively, the ambush can be adjusted to accommodate higher-level PCs. Adding one-shot magical items (such as arrows, *potions of speed*, or a scroll), increasing the number of orcs encountered, or replacing the orcs with tougher opposition are all options. Ogres, derro, or even trolls would be suitable replacements.

Beginning the Adventure

The PCs are traveling through one of the many twisting passages of the Underdark when they stumble on a cavern. When the PCs enter the cavern, continue with the following boxed text:

> The twisting corridors seem to wander aimlessly, with each uncertain step luring your party deeper into the bowels of this subterranean world. Finally, your lights reveal the passage opening to a cavern.
>
> The corridor ends at a stone ledge that plunges straight down. A rickety rope bridge with wooden planks is firmly attached to the stone ledge and continues into the chamber, its destination cloaked by the inky darkness. The cavern must be immense. Careful examination below the ledge reveals the placid surface of murky water. You are unable to determine its depth.

The chamber is roughly 110'-long by 60'-wide. The rope bridge extends between a pair of stone ledges. The bridge, despite its appearance, is sturdy and in no danger of collapsing from normal use. The ceiling reaches a maximum height of 85 feet and averages 65 feet. The water is fed by an underground stream. It is deepest in the northwest, reaching almost 30 feet. The depth gradually slopes to a mere two feet near the east wall. At the east wall is a ledge just above the surface of the water.

The Ambush

A tribe of orcs that resides nearby has set an elaborate ambush in this cavern to protect the route to their underground lair. About half a mile along the north passage is a fork in the corridor. To the left is the orc lair. The right corridor leads to the Underdark.

The ambush consists of 10 orcish archers, four spearmen, an orog leader, and a 5th-level orcish shaman. All of them are perched on a 35'-long by 5'-wide artificial stone ledge on the northwest side of the cavern. This ledge is about 40' above the water's surface, making it 10' above the bridge. The ledge was created by the shaman with the use of several *stone shape* spells. A concealed door hides a secret passage leading to the orc lair.

Orc Spearmen (4): INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (spear); SA swing; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 15 each; *MM*/281.

Orc Archers (10): INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6 each: THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1–8/1–8 (sheaf arrows) or 1–8 (scimitar); SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 15 each; *MM*/281; longbow and 25 sheaf arrows, scimitar.

Orog leader: INT high; AL LE; AC 3 (plate mail); MV 6; HD 3; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10+1; SA +1 to damage due to Strength; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14; XP 65; *MM*/281; plate mail armor, two-handed sword, *ring of the ram* (21 charges), *potion of speed*.

Orc Shaman: INT high; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3 (d8+4d4); hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 (scimitar); SA/SD

spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14; XP 650; *MM*/281. Spells: *command* (×2), *curse, faerie fire, light, heat metal, hold person, silence, 15' radius* (×2), *spiritual scimitar, prayer, stone shape;* chain mail, *wand of negation* (11 charges), *potion of extra-healing.*

Plan of Attack

Unless the PCs somehow discover the orcs, the humanoids automatically surprise their foes. The shaman begins by casting *silence, 15' radius* on the bridge toward the middle of the PCs. The four spearmen are attached to ropes secured into the ceiling above the bridge. All four swing from the ledge to the bridge, leading with their spears. Consider this a charge attack, granting a +1 to hit and causing double damage.

On the second round, the shaman casts *faerie fire,* outlining three targets, preferably warrior types. The archers all fire two arrows, concentrating on the outlined victims (gaining a +2 to hit due to the *faerie fire*). The orog leader uses his *ring of the ram* (expending two charges) to attempt to knock a warrior off the bridge. This attack causes 1d6 hp damage per charge and causes the victim to save vs. spells or be thrown off the bridge.

The spearmen continue to melee while dangling on the ropes (but this is no longer considered a charge attack). PCs aiming for the rope must hit AC 4 and inflict 6 hp damage with a slashing weapon to sever it. Note that archers firing into melee have a chance to strike the suspended orcs. (see *DMG,* chapter 9).

On the third round, the spearmen continue to melee, while the archers continue to pepper the PCs with arrows. The shaman now casts a *prayer* spell. The orog leader continues to use his *ring of the ram.*

The battle continues as the DM sees fit. The archers continue to fire until both their leader and the shaman fall. The suspended spearmen fight to the death, lacking any method to escape. Meanwhile, the orog uses his *ring* each round, unaware that the item has charges. If PCs manage to reach the ledge, the leader quaffs his *potion* and attacks to protect the shaman.

The shaman's tactics now depend on the PCs' actions. His goal is to force PCs off the bridge and let the water's denizen finish them off (see below). To this end, he uses his *command* spells ("jump") or the *wand* to negate any PCs using magic to fly or levitate off the bridge. The shaman saves *heat metal* for a metal-clad warrior and *hold person* for a wizard. He uses *light* to blind an opponent and then uses *spiritual scimitar* (same effects as *spiritual hammer,* just a different shape) to melee with others on the bridge.

The PCs can be knocked off the bridge in many ways. These include being hit with a natural 20, failing a save vs. the *ring of the ram,* being hit from a swinging charge, or falling victim to one of the shaman's spells. If any of these circumstances occur, the PC must make a Dexterity check to grab the bridge and hang precariously over the side. Otherwise, the victim falls 30' into the water. The water cushions the fall, so it causes only 2d6 hp damage, but the splash attracts the attention of the water's occupant.

Deep Trouble

A giant snapping turtle lives in the water. Years ago, the reptile made its way into this cavern through the underground stream. It fed on the abundant blind cave fish for years. Being the only predator, it wiped out all of the fish. By this time, the turtle was too big to leave via the underground outlets. It survived by eating the occasional fish or Underdark inhabitant.

Soon after, the orcs discovered it. Realizing it was trapped, they decided it would make an excellent guardian. They feed it scant amounts, just enough to keep it alive but hungry. When victims are forced into the water, the beast attacks ravenously. The turtle doesn't care if its meals are humans or orcs! If the battle moves to the water (and it probably will), a successful *charm monster* could gain the PCs a valuable ally.

PCs fighting in the water suffer all of the penalties outlined in the *DMG* for underwater combat. The DM may want to reduce the penalties if victims reach the southeastern side of the cavern, and are able to stand in the water. The turtle fights to the death, unless offered an immense quantity of food. Keep in mind that the turtle can extend its neck 10' to snatch victims in the air or climbing the walls.

Giant snapping turtle: INT non; AL N; AC 0/5; MV 3, swim 2; HD 10; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 6–24; SA 10'-long neck; SD hide limbs; SZ G (30' diameter); XP 3,000; *GREYHAWK® MC Appendix.*

Rewards

In addition to the magical items carried by the orog and the shaman, each orc carries 2–12 gp, plus a few worthless personal effects. The orog carries 26 gp and a chunk of obsidian worth 75 gp. The shaman carries 11 gp, 13 ep, and a gold brooch set with emeralds (worth 215 gp).

If the PCs search the water, they find a submerged chest. The iron-bound water-logged wooden box is attached to a rope that leads to the artificial ledge. It requires a combined Strength of 24 to haul the chest up to the ledge.

The chest is sealed with a rusty padlock. (The shaman has the key in his right boot.) Picking the lock incurs a –10% penalty due to the rust. The chest contains 324 gp, 156 ep, a small velvet-lined silver box (worth 175 gp) that holds a pouch of five amethysts (each worth 100 gp). The final item in the chest is a platinum tiara set with seven small sapphires (worth 1,200 gp).

Conclusion

Of course, the ambush need not be the last brush the PCs have with these orcs. The PCs could take the left fork and blunder into an orc warren, or, when the orcs learn of the attack on their comrades, raiding parties might hunt the PCs as they delve deeper into the Underdark.

If this encounter is used with the *Night Below* boxed set, the DM might include a clue tying the kuo-toa with the orcs. This could be a contract (written in Kuo-toan) or a form of currency used only in the City of the Glass Pool. Ω

OPERATION MANTA RAY

BY PAUL CULOTTA

Shaken, not stirred

Artwork by Stephen Daniele
Cartography by Diesel

After 26 years of military service, Paul has retired from the Army National Guard and now spends most of his time looking for new work, writing, and tending to his four cats.

"Operation Manta Ray" is an AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure for up to six PCs, levels 6–9 (about 40 levels). In this quest, a well-balanced party of neutral or good-aligned swashbuckling heroes works best, with one or two skilled in seamanship, rope use, or other nautical nonweapon proficiencies.

The DM may wish to review portions of *Pirates of the Fallen Stars* (FOR3) for additional background and atmosphere, but everything needed to run the adventure is contained within the text. If the DM has played "The Oracle at Sumbar" (*DUNGEON® Adventures* #48), this scenario can be a sequel to that quest, although either adventure can stand alone.

The adventure involves extracting a friendly secret agent from an evil pirate port city, but the DM can also use the setting and NPCs to develop his own pirate-theme campaign adventures. For example, the Sembians may want the Thayvian bombards destroyed, and the PCs could be commissioned to sabotage them. Or maybe the PCs are on the run and want to become pirates. Many other DM-developed plot lines are possible using this setting.

Adventure Background

For years, the pirates of the Sea of the Fallen Stars have preyed on merchant vessels and coastal towns in the region. The more powerful captains engage in an endless political struggle, trying to become the supreme pirate lord, but no one has garnered enough support to gain this title without a bloodbath. All of the pirates are united on two common points: stealing whatever they can, and defending their island bases.

The strongest pirate base is Immurk's Hold (population 5,000) on the northwestern end of the Dragonisle. It is a sheltered port protected by a huge fortress built into a rocky cliff. It can accommodate up to 80 medium or large vessels and their crews. Its awesome harbor defenses include a harbor chain, hidden breakrocks (artificial reefs), light ramships that can quickly sortie out to delay naval intruders, a flock of gargoyles to hinder airborne

threats, and four huge Thayvian bombards, each of which can blow a ship to smithereens with a single shot. Not so obvious are a group of malenti (evil aquatic elves) who patrol the undersea areas of the harbor and its entrance.

Established nations in this part of the world have naval forces to guard their shorelines and shipping lanes from the pirates, but there are never enough resources to do the job adequately. Years ago they attempted a few combined expeditions against the Dragonisle pirates, but each met with disaster. Although various nations still talk occasionally about mounting another expedition, it is only talk. Some say that the sea goddess Umberlee watches over the pirates, and fueling this rumor are reports that during the Time of Troubles, Umberlee's avatar appeared in the Pirate Isles.

A few years ago, the Sembian Navy sent a spy named Nosasha Marino (code name: Manta Ray) to infiltrate Immurk's Hold and report on the pirates' activities. On a moonless night, a small Sembian craft put him and a makeshift raft close to the harbor entrance to Immurk's Hold. The next morning, a pirate vessel picked up the apparent shipwreck victim and took him into the Hold. After a brief incarceration, Nosasha talked his way into joining the pirates. Because he was a pretty good fighter but had no nautical skills, he was made a guard at the harbor citadel (exactly as the Sembian Admiralty had hoped).

Within three years, Nosasha rose to his present rank of deputy harbormaster due to his wit, cunning, literacy, and overall leadership. To maintain his cover, he never hesitated to impose strict discipline among the guards. He also married a tough pirate lass named Amarella, who was first mate on the pirate galley, the *Black Osprey*. Although her rough ways and evil outlook bothered him, she was very attractive and honestly cared for him. She retired from the sea and presently serves as second-in-command of the citadel of Immurk's Hold.

Once he became the deputy harbormaster, Nosasha fed the Sembian Navy useful information. Using a *figurine of wondrous power* (a dolphin), he sent secret, coded messages to Sembian Naval Intelligence every month. He detailed harbor defenses, ships' departure dates and their areas of operation, crew and ship sizes, and other important information. The *figurine's* amazing underwater speed delivered its message to Sembia long before any pirate ship discovered its destination. Once it delivered its message (a tiny encoded scroll in its gullet), it returned to Nosasha at Immurk's Hold.

In the past four months, the Sembian navy has sunk or captured 10 pirate vessels. Pirates who recently attacked Sembian shipping found naval warships waiting for them, and now the pirates are suspicious. Never before had they suffered such foul luck. The powerful pirate captains believe that a spy is in their midst, and their agents are working hard to discover who it is.

Manta Ray has sent his last message, asking to be extracted because he has the uneasy feeling that someone is watching him. The Sembian Admiralty has decided to pull him out. All they need are a few good, highly-talented, swashbuckling heroes.

For the Players

The adventure begins in Yhaunn, a harbor city of Sembia, but the DM can start it just as easily elsewhere. While the PCs are roaming the city, they notice 30 dead pirates hanging from gallows in a public place. They learn that these pirates had been captured recently in a sea battle (PCs who make an Intelligence check might note that all of the pirates have tattoos). They also see and hear plenty of local praise about the recent successes of the Sembian Navy against the pirates. People warmly greet sailors and marines on the streets, young townspeople flirt with them, shopkeepers give them discounts on merchandise, and pub customers toast them loudly.

Given their level, the PCs should have a pretty decent reputation, and Sembian Naval Intelligence soon notes their presence. After the PCs have been in town for a while, they are approached by a Sembian marine officer named Sweenson. How and where this happens is up to the DM. Sweenson could show up wherever the PCs are staying, meet them at a tavern, or approach them in a dark alley. He informs the PCs that his superior, Lord Admiral Kilmer, wishes to offer them a commission aboard the flagship, the *Preying Mermaid*, which lies at anchor in the harbor. He arranges for them to come aboard late at night when there are few intrusive eyes and ears about.

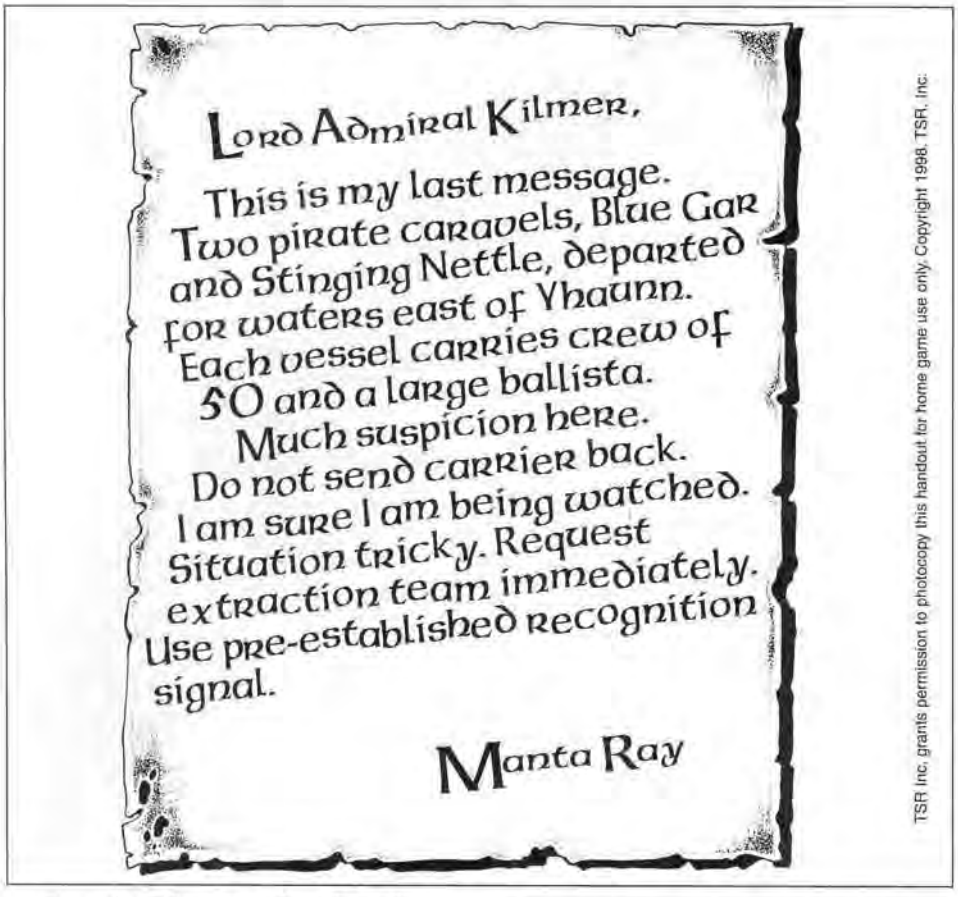
Once aboard, the PCs are guided below the galley's decks to a cabin:

> You are escorted to a large, furnished room decorated with various weapons, unusual shells, a large map, and pieces of colorful coral. Seated at a table is a bearded man in his early 50's. He wears a navy-blue coat and has a fine long sword on his belt. He has dark brown hair and bright hazel eyes that seem to twinkle as he greets you with a warm smile. A white cat with black and tan splotches sits on a nearby bed, observing you with a look of dazed curiosity.

After thanking the PCs for coming, the man introduces himself as Lord Admiral Kilmer, chief of Sembian Naval Intelligence. He has heard of the PCs' most recent adventures and says that they are perfect for completing a "special mission" for him. He emphasizes that this is a dangerous mission that could easily end in the PCs' deaths (and Sembia will disavow knowledge of them). Even so, he reassures them that the survivors will strike a blow against the forces of evil and earn a generous reward. If the PCs have no interest in completing this mission, all they must do is say so, and they may leave.

To PCs who want to know more details of the mission and rewards, Kilmer states that the only thing he can tell them initially is that it involves rescuing someone very important. Further details are classified and cannot be discussed until there is an agreement by the PCs to accept the mission. He has no problems with revealing the rewards. Successful PCs are given their choice of 1,000 gp; letters of marque as a Sembian privateer along with a small sloop (one sloop for the whole party, not each PC); or 250 gp and a commission in the Sembian Naval Intelligence Service as a full-time agent. He also mentions that should any PC die on the mission and the body be brought back, arrangements will be made with a local temple to try to *resurrect* the deceased free of charge.

PCs may insist on knowing more details of the mission before agreeing. If necessary, Admiral Kilmer agrees on the condition that, should they refuse, the PCs agree to imbibe a potion that makes them forget where they were and what they discussed. It is the only way he reveals the sensitive aspects of this quest.



TSR Inc. grants permission to photocopy this handout for home game use only. Copyright 1998. TSR, Inc.

Once the PCs agree, the admiral relates the following:

> You may have heard of our recent success against the pirates. This is due largely to the efforts of our agent, Manta Ray. Some time ago we smuggled him into Immurk's Hold, the largest pirate base of the region, to work his way into a position where he could provide us with timely information on pirate ship movements, armaments, intentions, defenses, leadership, and anything else that could help us stop their depredations. Through our agent's coded messages, we have intercepted many pirate ships within the past three months. Alas, Manta Ray now feels that his position is becoming compromised, and he wants to be extracted. Here is his latest message.

The DM should provide the PCs with the handout on this page.

> It will be up to you to find our agent, using a conversation that both you and he recognize. Use of this device is critical, because I cannot reveal who the agent is or how we received his messages so quickly. Were I to do so and you were captured before finding him, you might reveal this information through torture, mental probing, or magic. I will tell you that he is male, human, and not a member of a pirate vessel crew; instead he is a resident of Immurk's Hold. We believe that the pirates already have deduced this much. Once you find Manta Ray, you must get him out of there the best way you can. This is the recognition signal. Commit this to memory, please.
>
> **You:** Are you from Chessenta?
>
> **Manta Ray:** No, and I would never go there.
>
> **You:** And why not?
>
> **Manta Ray:** Because they don't play chess in Chessenta.
>
> **You:** Yes, but they have other fine games there.

Admiral Kilmer can provide a map, a small sloop, and a crack crew to transport them. He recommends that this ship be disguised in some way. He doesn't know the best way to get into Immurk's Hold and tells the PCs that they should devise their own plan for getting there and out. He can provide some limited equipment and supply needs.

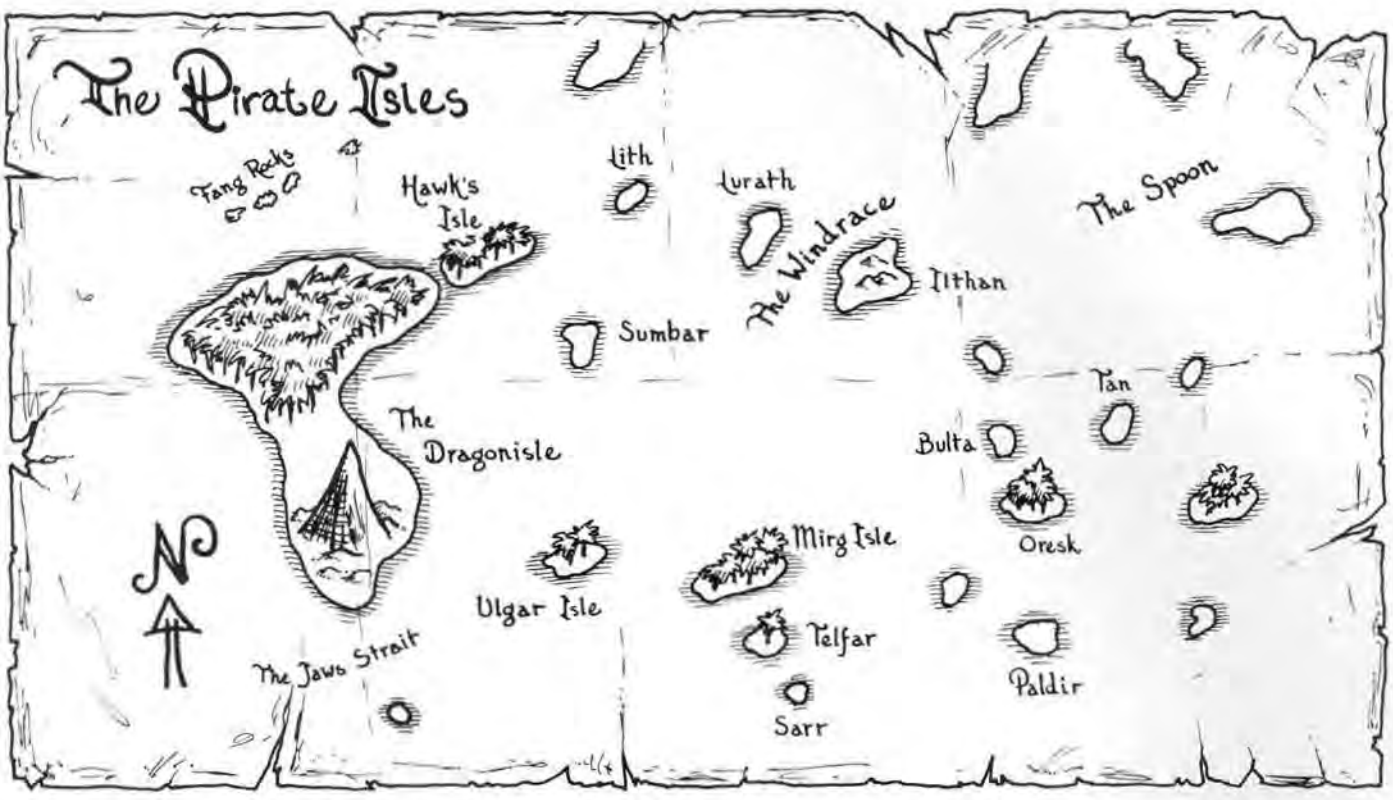
DM Note: The admiral can fulfill any reasonable request for ordinary equipment and supplies, but no magical assistance except a *potion of healing* (one per PC).

Fortunately, the admiral knows quite a bit about the defenses of Immurk's Hold. He tells the PCs that there is a cliffside harbor keep with over 200 soldiers and ogres stationed at the entrance. A huge harbor chain lies across the entrance, and it is raised and lowered by giants who live in the sea level floor of the fortress. Also inside the keep are four huge bombards, Thayvian war engines that launch enormous stone balls filled with a flammable liquid. Just one of these projectiles can sink a warship. Small ramships can sortie out if necessary to delay naval invasions, while the rest of the pirate ships make ready to do battle. Then there are hidden artificial reefs that are moved around the harbor entrance. Finally, hideous gargoyles patrol the whole area from the air, and a band of evil aquatic elves prowl under the waves.

Travel to Immurk's Hold

PCs should carefully plan for the dangerous voyage to Immurk's Hold. If they requested a map, sailing vessel, or supplies, these items arrive the next day. (See the map on the following page.) Admiral Kilmer provides the *Remora,* a 30'-long fishing sloop with a crew of five sailors. It accommodates the PCs and their equipment, but not large animals such as horses. The master, Jambo Felton, is a huge (7' tall) friendly man with short wiry hair, soft brown eyes, and fine ebony skin. The other crew members (Quig, Shorty, Cassaltra, and Mervin) follow his orders without question, and they all get along well. Each member of the crew is rated as crack (See FOR3/90). If the PCs object to traveling in such a small vessel, Jambo points out that his vessel is much less noticeable than a large caravel or galley, and he believes that it gives them a better chance of getting close undetected.

Jambo: AL N; AC 5; MV 12; F4; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 15, C 15, I 13, W 14, Ch 13; ML 15; XP 120; *studded leather armor +1,* scimitar (specialized +2/+3 total), dagger, gold earring (value 5 gp), pouch (17 gp, 45 sp).



TSR Inc. grants permission to photocopy this handout for home game use only. Copyright 1998. TSR, Inc.

Crew (4): AL N, AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 20, 16, 15, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 15 while Jambo stands, 13 otherwise; XP 35 each; leather armor, long bows, flight arrows (20 each), short swords, pouch with 2–20 gp worth of coins each.

Although it is up to the PCs to plan the operation, Jambo has lived at sea for 30 years and knows some of the legends and rumors of the area. If asked, he recommends against getting close to Sumbar because he says the reefs around there shift often somehow (FOR3/66). He also will not sail near Hawk's Island (rumors of deformed, hideous monsters that come out and attack by canoes; FOR3/57–58) or Ulgar's Island (legend of a vampire and its many minions; FOR3/68). Finally, he strongly recommends against approaching the Dragonisle from the east because of rumors of numerous dragon turtles in that area. If the PCs want to head for a different island to use as a base or a place to hide the sloop, Jambo recommends that they use one of the small isles just south of the Dragonisle. He also recommends that any approach to the Dragonisle be made at night.

The voyage takes a good two weeks. En route the PCs may have random encounters developed by the DM and they may take the opportunity to learn new nonweapon proficiencies from the knowledgeable NPC mariners. Aboard the *Remora,* there is ample opportunity to learn such proficiencies as rope use, seamanship, and navigation. If the PCs have open slots for new nonweapon proficiencies, the DM can merely rule that at the end of the voyage they learned one proficiency of their choice.

The *Remora* is built for speed, not for fighting. While Jambo and his crew can sail circles around most ships, they dare not stop and fight. The ship has no ballistae, catapults, or other engines of war aboard.

Getting Into Immurk's Hold

With all the warnings the PCs have received, they should not try a direct suicidal attack on the harbor defenses. They may try a bold approach: sailing right up and professing that they wish to join the pirates or that they are smugglers coming to buy or sell illegal trade goods. Or the PCs may try to infiltrate the place, which may involve establishing a small base somewhere on the Dragonisle or a nearby island.

❖ **Joining the Pirates.** The DM should have the PCs' vessel greeted at the harbor entrance as indicated in the "Arriving Ships" section. Prospective pirates are greeted warmly and shown into special quarters in the city, where they are restricted until they can be "interviewed." They are treated well, but later a large group of pirates burst in on the PCs. These pirates shove burlap sacks over the PCs' heads, strip them of their equipment and belongings, and row them to the main island to "The Pirates' Run." If the PCs put up a fight and kill one of the pirates, they are fed to the hill giants in the citadel.

❖ **"We are smugglers."** Smugglers are welcome at Immurk's Hold but not allowed in the city itself. Again, the DM should run the "Arriving Ships" section but then refer to the section labeled "Smuggler's Island."

❖ **Overland Infiltration.** Pirates and aerial patrols of gargoyles routinely

Key NPCs

Nosasha Marino A.K.A "Manta Ray": AL N; AC 3; MV 12; F6; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 12, D 17, C 15, I 18, W 10, Ch 13.

WP: cutlass, dagger, belaying pin, javelin, light crossbow.

NWP: swimming, reading/writing—Common, survival (Tropics), appraising, heraldry.

Magical Items: *leather armor +1; long sword +1; figurine of wondrous power* (dolphin that delivers message to known location and returns).

Nosasha is 5'10" tall with light brown hair, dark brown eyes, and a medium build. A native Sembian, he is torn between two loyalties: the Sembian Navy and his wife, the pirate Amarella. He is quiet and unassuming, but he can put a blade between an enemy's ribs without much thought. He is moody and sensitive, but he is tremendously smart with mathematics. Nosasha has the typical garrison tattoo on his right forearm (a fort with the letters IH centered).

Amarella Marino: AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; F7; hp 60; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 or 2/1 (specialized weapon); Dmg by weapon; S 17, D 16, C 15, I 11, W 12, Ch 15.

WP: cutlass (specialized), hand axe, long bow (+1 to hit), spear.

NWP: swimming, navigation, rope use, blind-fighting.

Magical Items: *leather armor +1; cutlass of speed +2; ring of protection +1; boots of elvenkind.*

Amarella is a 5'7" hard-looking half-elven woman with dirty blonde hair and light green eyes. She is absolutely infatuated with her husband Nosasha as she admires his abilities to read, write, and cipher. In contrast to Nosasha, Amarella is loud and brash. The only thing she enjoys more than a party is a good duel. Previously the first mate on the vessel the *Black Osprey,* she is wanted in several ports for piracy. Amarella bears a tattoo on her left arm (a black osprey) and one on her right (a fort with the letters IH in the middle).

The Major Pirate Captains

Gasteban: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; F9; hp 77; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2 or 2/1 (specialized weapon); Dmg by weapon; S 16, D 15, C 14, I 15, W 13, Ch 17.

WP: long sword (specialized), belaying pin, footman's mace, long bow, pike.

NWP: swimming, navigation, musical instrument (Chessentan mandolin), blind-fighting, reading/writing.

Magical Items: *long sword +2, flame blade; chain mail +2; ring of free action.*

Standing 6' tall, Gasteban is a deposed Chessentan noble who fled to the pirate isles a decade ago with three ships. He has black hair, gray eyes, and a waxed mustache. A duel left him with a wicked scar above his left eye. His stated aim is to unite the pirates into an army, but deep down he wants to retake his ancestral lands in Chessenta. If PCs show strong abilities during the "Pirates' Run," he makes a strong pitch to enlist them on one of his ships. He pays particular attention to any PC spellcasters, as he is slightly afraid of the wizard Zensil, who serves Vurgrom, his main rival. His flagship is the great Chessentan galley *Lancet,* which contains three large ballistae and 50 tough marines and sailors.

Teldar: AL NE; AC 3; MV 12; T14; hp 43; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 11, D 17, C 12, I 17, W 16, Ch 14; SA thieving abilities: PP 70%, OL 70%, FRT 80%, MS 75%, HS 60%, DN 80%, CW 80%, RL 80%.

WP: short sword, dagger, light crossbow, two-weapon specialization, ambidextrous.

NWP: blind-fighting, direction sense, local history, rope use, seamanship, tumbling.

Magical Items: *leather armor +2; ring of spell turning; necklace of missiles; cloak of elvenkind; serpentine owl; potion of human control; potion of levitation.*

Teldar is a 6'3" thin man of 50 years. He has a streak of gray through his jet-black hair, and he is clean shaven. His complexion is brown from exposure to sun and sea. Many pirates consider him to be their leader, and few consider challenging him (except Vurgrom). While he disclaims such leadership, he quietly seeks to keep things on an even keel. His flagship, the *Kissing Maiden,* is a galleon that has a small catapult and two medium ballistae. His crew of 100 trained sailors would follow him anywhere.

If Teldar is convinced that the PCs are genuine pirates, he is friendly and offers counsel and assistance to them. He quietly tells them that Vurgrom is too brash and Gasteban too ambitious. He certainly has no problems with their joining the crew of any of the ships allied with him.

Vurgrom the Mighty: AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; F12; hp 99; THAC0 7; #AT 2/1 (specialty weapon) or 3/2; Dmg by weapon; S 18/84 (+2/+4), D 13, C 17, I 9, W 13, Ch 13.

WP: battle axe (specialized), cleaving/crushing weapons, weapon and shield style specialization, crossbow, dagger/dirk.

NWP: blind-fighting, navigation; rope use; seamanship; swimming; survival (Tropics).

Magical Items: *ring mail +2; shield +1; battle axe +2; ring of truth; potion of extra-healing; potion of speed.*

Vurgrom's boasts are as large as his wide girth. There is no captain or sailor greater than Vurgrom. If one has any doubt about this, he will clear them right up with a well-spun yarn or, if necessary, a one-on-one duel. In combat he wields a mighty battle axe that has separated many a head from its shoulders. Typically he does not wear his *ring of truth,* since he has discovered that it compels him to speak honestly. He has a henchman named Zensil of Westgate, a 9th-level enchanter who is renowned for summoning and charming monsters to aid Vurgrom in his battles. (Vurgrom boasts that these are not necessary, but no one has ever seen him turn down Zensil's help).

Vurgrom's flagship is *Maelstrom,* a caravel with 40 trained crewmen. While this may look puny compared to Teldar's and Gasteban's flagships, with Zensil on board it is powerful indeed. Vurgrom always travels accompanied by three other ships the same size. In battle, he relies on the caravel's speed and quickness to close with the enemy so he can board and wreak havoc with his battle axe.

To the PCs, Vurgrom is friendly once they prove themselves in the Pirates' Run. He targets PC fighters especially as potential recruits for one of his ships.

patrol the borders of Immurk's Hold. It is very difficult to get into the city without being noticed (only 15% chance unless the PCs are using something like *invisibility* spells). A typical patrol consists of 10 heavily armed pirates. Each patrol has a smoke emitter that spews out purple smoke for 15 rounds (see sidebar). Once the smoke is out, a gargoyle patrol (see below) responds in 1d6 rounds to help out.

Typical Pirate Patrol

Leader: AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; F5; hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17 (+1/+1), D 15, C 16, I 12, W 11, Ch 16; ML 16; XP 175; chain mail, shield, cutlass (specialized), dagger, footman's flail.

Patrol Wizard: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; W4; hp 15; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (staff); S 9, D 16, C 15, I 16, W 12, Ch 10; ML 14; XP 270; robes, *wand of paralyzation* or *wand of magic missiles* (DM's choice), smoke emitter. Spells carried: *color spray, grease, shield; stinking cloud, web.*

Patrol Cleric: AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; P3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (footman's mace); S 12, D 14, C 12, I 10, W 15, Ch 13; ML 14; XP 120; ring mail, shield, holy symbol (evil deity). Spells: *bless, cure light wounds* (×2), *darkness; charm person or mammal, hold person.*

Pirates (7): AL any evil; AC 6; MV 12; F3, F2 (×3), F1 (×3); hp 20, 14 (×3), 10, 9 (×2); THAC0 18, 17, or 16; Dmg by weapon; ML 13; XP 65, 35 (×3), 15 (×3); studded leather armor, shield, short bow, 12 arrows, cutlass, belaying pin.

Aerial Patrol: Gargoyles are up and about at all hours. Without *invisibility*, flying PCs are noticed 95% of the time during daylight hours and 50% of the time at night.

Gargoyles (5): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, fly 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 30, 28 (×2), 24, 22; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–6/1–4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M (6' tall); ML 11; XP 420; *MM*/125.

Underwater infiltration is not a good plan. Evil malenti quietly patrol the harbor entrance underwater, ensuring that nothing unwanted gets in. They also patrol Smuggler's Island to make sure that no one swims to Immurk's Hold. PCs underwater have a 20% chance per turn (non-cumulative) of being detected by a malenti patrol. One of the malenti has a conch horn that summons another malenti patrol and a killer whale in 2d6 rounds.

Malenti (10): INT high; AL LE; AC 6 (9); MV 9, swim 15; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1–8 (trident); SA +1 on attack rolls with tridents; attacks with nets are vs. AC 6, with successful hits entangling weapon of opponent (50% chance) or the opponent (50% chance); MR 90% resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M (6'+ tall); ML 13; XP 420; *MM*/110–111.

Killer Whale: INT average; AL N; AC 4; MV swim 30; HD 10; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 4–24; SA keeps prey in jaws after initial bite (automatic damage); SZ H (20' long); ML 14; XP 1,400; *MM*/358.

Even if the PCs manage to get into Immurk's Hold undetected, they do not blend in easily. All the pirates and the inhabitants of Immurk's Hold have at least one tattoo identifying the person as a member of a ship or a permanent resident of Immurk's Hold itself. If the PCs witnessed pirates executed back in Yhaunn, they may have noticed this; also a PC making a successful local history proficiency check realizes the significance of the tattoos. Not only do the tattoos help detect intruders, they have inspired fewer pirates to surrender since their tattoos are almost certain death marks if they are caught by the authorities. Thus, a PC without tattoos stands out like a sore thumb.

Another difficulty consists of three magical archways erected by pirate wizards. They look like normal walkways going over the streets from one building to another, but they radiate a field that dispels all *invisibility* spells and makes *rings of invisibility* non-functional for one hour. Also, they dispel all efforts at magical disguise *(change self, alter self, polymorph self, polymorph other* and similar spells are dispelled and *hats of disguise* and similar items stop working for two hours). Although similar potion effects are dispelled, the potions themselves are not. Druids in an animal form may make a saving throw vs. wands when they go under one of these archways: success indicates that they continue in their animal form.

The archways are watched discretely by a vigilant, heavily armed patrol. Since it is illegal to use disguise or *invisibility* magic in Immurk's Hold, violators are captured and taken to the stockade.

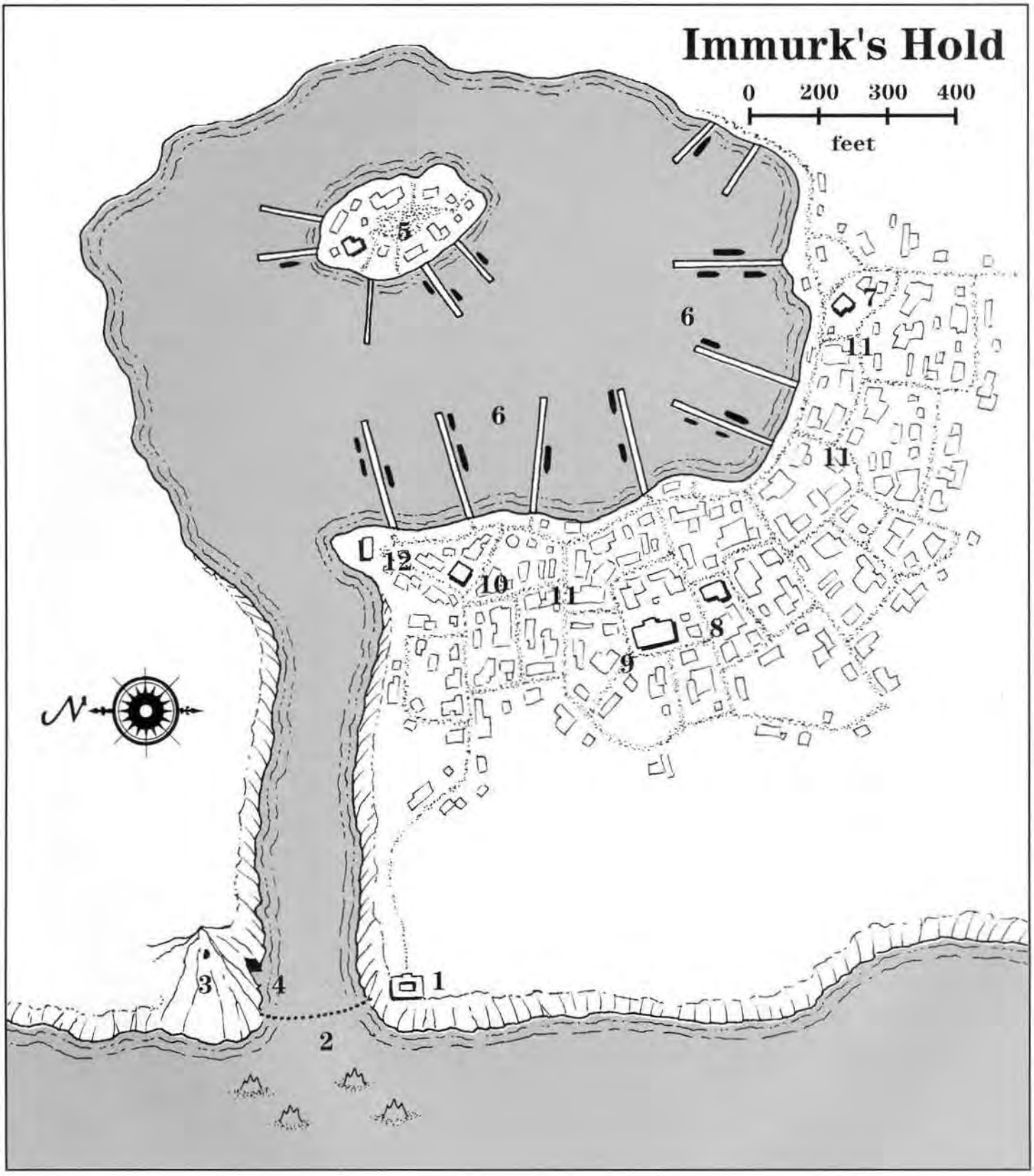
Smoke Emitter

Smoke emitters are "one shot" magical items that resemble metal canteens. When the cap is removed, the ingredients mix with the outside air, releasing a brightly colored smoke that fills a 30' cube. This smoke is a shimmering array of glowing colors which can be seen even at night. The smoke stays in the area for 5 rounds unless there is a strong wind; even so, it remains visible for 1 round. When activated, the container becomes extremely hot and cannot be held. People inside the smoke can see nothing until it blows away, but the smoke does not cause sneezing, coughing, or irritated eyes. It is believed that the Red Wizards of Thay developed the emitters as battle signaling devices, but they discovered that many of their mindless or low intelligence troops (undead, gnolls, goblins, etc.) either did not see colors, saw colors in a different spectrum, or became confused trying to remember which color is which and what they meant. Thus, the Red Wizards export these devices to allies and friends, such as the pirates of Immurk's Hold. They charge 150 gp per emitter. The secret of the ingredients is closely guarded by the Red Wizards.

Finding Manta Ray

Assuming that the PCs get into the port and look around, finding Manta Ray may seem like looking for a needle in a haystack. There are 5,000 inhabitants, plus a transient population of pirates coming in and out of the harbor on a daily basis. PCs know that Manta Ray is a human male. They also know that he is not a member of a pirate vessel, so looking on board pirate ships is fruitless (not to mention dangerous). The admiral also told them that Manta Ray had given them information on ship movements, fortifications, etc. Just asking around reveals that much of this information is not well known. The PCs can reason that Manta Ray must be in a special position to gain access to this information.

Ships must file their sailing plans with the secretary in the Captain's Hall (area **8**) so that the chain may be lowered when the ship leaves. The secretary passes abstracts of the plans to the Harbormaster's office in the citadel. Characters may reason that Manta Ray


Immurk's Hold
0 200 300 400
feet
1
2
3
4
5
6
6
7
8
9
10
11
11
11
12
N

is someone who works in the Harbormaster's Office. The deputy harbormaster, Nosasha Marino, is human and male. A little inquiry indicates that many of the pirates think a lot of him. He has proven himself a capable leader since he was shipwrecked three years ago and showed up at the harbor entrance (just about the time when Manta Ray infiltrated).

If the PCs are captured, they are incarcerated in the city's stockade (area **9**) after being stripped of all equipment. The following day they are taken to Captains' Hall (area **8**) to be judged. After being found guilty, the PCs are sentenced to be fed to the hill giants that live in the citadel. Fortunately, Nosasha sits with the other captains, and he wonders if these prisoners might be the team that has been sent to extract him. With a cruel grin, he suggests that the PCs be put through the Pirates' Run; if they survive, they can be added to the citadel garrison. After some discussion, the pirate captains agree since it is always great entertainment to watch aspiring pirates and prisoners attempt the Run.

Immurk's Hold

The city is loosely ruled by the pirate captains who make it their home port. The actual day-to-day administration of the port and city is left to the harbormaster who lives in the citadel. The DM should recall that Manta Ray is the harbormaster's deputy. Although the harbormaster is selected by the Captains' Council, his deputy is appointed by the harbormaster himself.

The Captains' Council includes all pirate ship masters, each with one vote. They determine the amount of taxes they pay for the maintenance of the port, its defenses, and future developments. All votes are public, and lesser captains generally ally themselves with the powerful pirates (see the key NPC sidebar for brief descriptions of them).

The enforcement of law and order is administered by the harbormaster's military units and shore patrols levied from ships in port. The laws are few, but they are rigorously enforced:

❖ No weapons may be drawn in Immurk's Hold except by the designated military or shore patrol units. This law becomes automatically suspended if the port is attacked or in the case of self-defense.

❖ Fighting is allowed only by unarmed combatants in designated areas under the supervision of military or shore patrols. If unarmed fighting starts elsewhere, all fighters are given 10 lashes and dragged to the nearest park to finish their business.

❖ If Immurk's Hold is attacked, every able-bodied pirate must attend to its defense. Failure to do so is punishable by death.

❖ Armed challenges to a captain's right to rule his ship are not allowed anywhere on the Dragonisle, both on land and in its coastal waters.

❖ All pirates must pay their debts in coin or equivalent goods. Any pirate who fails to do so is given 20 lashes and must pay his creditor twice the amount owed. False claims are punishable by 20 lashes and a fine equivalent to the amount claimed.

❖ The freedom to worship any deity may not be disturbed in any way, except that religious practices may not be detrimental to Immurk's Hold, its inhabitants, or legitimate visitors. Punishment for this rule is at the discretion of the Captain's Council, depending on the severity of the offense.

❖ Smugglers, traders, and other non-pirates are welcome in Immurk's Hold for trading and bartering. All such transactions must occur on Smuggler's Island. Non-pirates must remain on their ships or on Smuggler's Island. Violators are put through the Pirates' Run.

❖ All pirates and residents of Immurk's Hold must bear a tattoo that represents their ship or the port itself. Children must select a tattoo when they reach 16 years of age. Violators are put through the Pirates' Run and tattooed immediately thereafter (if they survive).

❖ Spies and traitors are put to death immediately, although the Captains may decide to be merciful and put guilty parties through the Pirates' Run. Using magic that turns one *invisible*, changes one's appearance, shape, sex, etc., is presumptive evidence that one is a spy or a traitor. Someone who uses such magic but convinces the Captain's Council that it was for a piratical purpose is given 20 lashes in the Temple of Loviatar. Second offenders are put to death, regardless of excuse.

Typically, cases of law violations are heard by the Captains' Council (see area **8**). The few laws of the city leave a lot of room for questionable conduct and sales of goods and services. Practically anything can be bought or sold in Immurk's Hold, and the rule of caveat emptor applies.

Arriving Ships

Arriving ships may not enter until the massive harbor chain that bars the entrance is lowered. The alarm horn is blown, and at least two ramships sail out to investigate. If the ship is unknown, six gargoyles fly out with the ramships, and two killer whales and 20 malenti make their way to the vessel. Once the master of the vessel convinces the pirates that they are friendly, the harbor chain is lowered, and the vessel is allowed in.

Oared ships may make their own way to their assigned berth in the harbor (or Smuggler's Island) but must follow a killer whale (ridden by a malenti), which pilots the ship past the artificial reefs hidden around the entrance. Sailing vessels must drop all sails and be guided in by the malenti and whales (the fantasy equivalents of tugboats).

To exit Immurk's Hold requires a reverse process. Departing ships must display their colors so the guards in the citadel can check the list of departing ships and lower the harbor chain. Sailing ships must be guided out by the killer whales.

The following are brief descriptions of some of the notorious places within Immurk's Hold. Depending on where the PCs go, the DM may need to develop descriptions of additional structures and NPCs that he might find interesting. There are numerous bazaars, bordellos, inns, bath houses, gaming houses, temples, and other places for the pirates and city inhabitants.

1. The Citadel. The adventurers easily see this sprawling stone citadel from the city or the harbor entrance. The citadel is formed from natural rock and is the result of decades of digging and improvement. It overlooks the harbor entry from a height of 80 feet.

2. The Channel. One hundred yards wide, this channel is too narrow for large sailing ships to maneuver in, although oared vessels can get through it with no problem. Several artificial reefs lie hidden under the waves outside the channel, and the passage is barred to passing ships by a huge chain

(the metal of the links is 6" thick). Hitting the reefs rips into the bottom of a sailing vessel, and the chain is impassable while raised. These reefs are moved by the killer whales and malenti once a month.

3. Gargoyle Cave. From a cliff cave north of the harbor entrance, a band of gargoyles provide aerial security and patrols around the entire area. The pirates give unwanted visitors to the chaotic gargoyles who enjoy dropping them from various heights into the sea. Only six gargoyles stay in the cave at any one time, as the rest are on patrol. Scattered around the cave are 20 gems that the gargoyles use in a mysterious gargoyle game that involves throwing the gems against the cave walls. Total value of the gems is 3,500 gp. Gargoyle statistics appear on page 43.

4. Ramships Cave. Within this cave are ten 20'-long ramships, each crewed by 10 prisoners and a pirate. Two ships are on alert at all times, and they go out to the harbor mouth whenever a vessel approaches. When there is an attack, all 10 sortie out to slow enemy vessels until the pirate ships in the harbor get under way and the numerous missile weapons in the citadel start taking their toll. Although these light vessels do not cause much damage, each collision slows a larger vessel's speed by 1. The ramships may also be loaded with combustibles that are lit prior to impact (leaving the crew no option but to swim for shore).

The prisoner quarters are a miserable place with little more than straw and slop buckets. The prisoners do not dare escape because they are well aware of the malenti and killer whale patrols, not to mention the gargoyles. A few tried, but the pirates gave them to the gargoyles and forced the rest of the prisoners to watch the cruel monsters have their fun.

Prisoners (100): All 0-level humans, AC 10, hp 4–6 each. Most (80%) are sailors from a variety of countries, and all would be glad to escape. If the PCs manage to capture a large vessel, the prisoners will gladly serve as its crew.

Pirates (12): AL any evil; AC 8; MV 12; F3 (×2), F2 (×6), F1 (×4); hp 20 (×2), 14 (×6), 9 (×4); THAC0 18, 17, or 16; Dmg by weapon; ML 13; XP 65, 35, or 15; leather armor, cutlass, belaying pin, whip. Each pirate has 1–10 sp.

5. Smuggler's Island. This small island accommodates up to 10 large vessels at its piers. A large bazaar in the center of the island offers traders the chance to buy and sell practically anything—parrots, exotic spices, bolts of cloth, weaponry, armor, etc. Prices are 80% of the normal *PHB* prices because there are no customs duties or sales taxes.

A small clean inn (20 beds), the Voyager's Haven, gives mariners a place to stay on land. Rooms are 3 gp a night and meals are 2 gp each. Each meal is a smorgasbord all-you-can-eat affair featuring rare seafood dishes (spiced rice and shrimp, sweetened pickled eel, fiery dragon turtle stew, broiled lobsters, etc.). The innkeeper is a talkative, friendly halfling named Pardo (CN, AC 10, T6, 25 hp). Both he and his staff (all humans, T1–4) are spies who report any suspicious activity to the pirate patrol on the island. If the PCs have declared that they want to become pirates, the patrons of the Voyager's Haven taunt them.

The patrol leader meets with the captain of newly-arrived ships, advises him of the laws of Immurk's Hold, and warns against anyone leaving the island. He also advises against anyone swimming in the harbor because "there are things down there that might eat you."

6. Port Docks. These docks accommodate up to 70 vessels. When a pirate ship arrives, a harbormaster military unit greets it, reminds the crew of the laws, and levies a shore patrol. Crew members hate this duty as it prevents them from enjoying the wild and wanton pleasures of the town. There are dozens of shore patrols wandering through town every night (1 per ship in port).

Shore Patrol (5 pirates): AL any evil; AC 7; MV 12; F3, F2, F1 (×3); hp 22 15, 9, 8, 7; THAC0 18, 17, or 16; Dmg by weapon; ML 13; XP 65, 35, 15 (×3); leather armor, shield, cutlass, belaying pin. Each pirate has 1–5 sp.

7. Tattoo Parlor. Chen, a masterful tattoo artist from Shou Lung, runs his thriving business on the outskirts of town. He uses his needles and different colored inks (57 varieties) to etch in gorgeous tattoos. A recognized tattoo of any of the pirate lords or Immurk's Hold costs 1 gp, as will any tattoo he has in his book of designs. A custom tattoo costs no less than 5 gp and an intense bargaining session. Chen takes his time with his artistry (1d8 hours to finish a job). Chen's book has 300 different designs, and it would be worth 100 gp to the right buyer.

8. Captains' Hall. Here the pirate captains meet daily to conduct business, make important policy decisions, and mete out justice to those charged with crimes. Each pirate captain has one vote, as does the harbormaster, but most captains don't show up. Instead, they give their proxy to another, usually one of the three main contenders (see sidebar on page 42). Since it takes a majority vote to get anything done, little is accomplished.

If the PCs wander into Captain's Hall during the day, they are likely to hear "the big three" arguing over some minor issue while four or five other captains sit quietly and await the outcome. The main meeting room has comfortable chairs for 100 participants and is well lit. It always has two military patrols guarding the hall.

Also within Captains' Hall is the Secretary's Office, the place where all captains file their plans for where they are going to sail, the date of departure, and date of return. It is also where returning captains account for their plunder and arrange to turn in 5% for upkeep of the harbor, citadel, and city.

Usually there are six or seven clerks (0-level, AC 10, 6 hp each) hard at work receiving documents, plotting ship locations (both enemy and friendly sightings), and writing messages. If a conflict rises between two pirate captains wanting to raid the same coastal town, Belltide the Secretary tries to mediate the conflict. Failing that, he refers them to the Pirates' Council. For the PCs, the most important thing about the Secretary's Office is the fact that a summary of each captain's sailing plan goes to the Citadel so that the harbormaster knows when to schedule whales for guiding ships out of the channel, when to lower the harbor chain, and when to expect certain ships back. It is this information that Manta Ray sends to the Sembians.

Belltide: AL NE; AC 10; MV 4; F4; hp 31; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 6, C 12, I 13, W 15, Ch 14; ML 16; XP 120; cutlass, crutch, dagger. An older retired pirate embittered by the loss of his leg to a ballista years ago, Belltide stumps

around on a wooden peg leg and crutch. He has the thankless job of trying to sort out the squabbles among the captains. If provoked, he wields his crutch with a vengeance (Dmg 1–6).

9. Stockade. This penned enclosure holds those destined for the auction block or those awaiting judgment for crimes. It has 300 cells, each one having nothing more than a hard bunk and chamber pot. It is guarded by three pirate patrols augmented by five fierce war dogs. Slave auctions are held on Smuggler's Island once a week.

Dogs, War (5): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 16 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each; *MM*/57.

10. Guard Station. This stone building accommodates the numerous pirate garrisons that patrol in and around the city. Shore patrols levied from ships also report here for assignments. The Station Commander is Brekar Lotala, a huge man who puts up with little and who plans one day to replace Nosasha as deputy harbormaster.

Brekar Lotala: AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; F7; hp 63; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/09, D 15, C 16, I 13, W 14, Ch 16; ML 16; XP 120; *chain mail +2, cutlass +2* (specialized; 2/1 attacks, +1 to hit, +2 damage), dagger, *belaying pin +1*, gold symbol of office (250 gp if melted down), 75 gp.

11. Dispelling Archways. At these three locations are enchanted archways that dispel *invisibility, polymorph self, change self,* or similar spells or devices. Each one is watched by a shore patrol from a ship. These archways in no way look distinguishable from any of the other dozen or so archways throughout Immurk's Hold.

12. Pirates' Run. This is where would-be pirates and captured prisoners are tested. It is heavily patrolled so that no one can peek inside. Those who want to observe the fun within must pay a 2 gp admission charge.

The Pirates' Run

If the PCs are captured or volunteer to become pirates, the pirate captains decide to put them through the Pirates' Run, a grueling test of piracy skills. The PCs may not take armor and shields but may take one weapon provided by the pirates: a cutlass, hand axe, pike, or belaying pin (club). Spellcasters may take up to three spells of their choice, but not spells of mass destruction (*blade barriers, fireballs, cloudkills,* etc.). All PCs may also take up to five ordinary items, and a cleric PC can take a holy symbol of his faith as one of these five items. If PCs volunteered to become pirates, they get a small break: each can take a personal weapon and one minor magical item.

Once the PCs are ready, Gauntlet George, an enormous pirate with scars covering his arms and face, briefs them:

> "This test is one of survival. Not many make it because it takes wits, derring-do, and a strong arm and heart, mateys. Pay attention to yer instructions. Take nothing for granted. Along the way, ye may see some of me friends. Know them by their whips and black armor. Don't attack them, because if ye do, crossbowmen will plug ye. Those of ye who survive will join the finest lot of pirates in the Sea of the Fallen Stars! Now follow me."

Station 1: The Farewell Toast. The PCs are led into a room that has an open-air ceiling. About three dozen pirates stand on a wooden gallery that overlooks all the stations, and they peer into this room while filling glasses from jugs. Manta Ray is among those watching from above, but he does not draw attention to himself. A permanent antimagic field covers the area, and although spells within the Run area are possible, magic cast higher than 15' above the ground level snuffs out.

The first room looks like a pub, where a bartender pours drinks into several glasses; he is dressed in black armor and has a cat-of-nine-tails at his side. Gauntlet George tells each of the PCs to take a glass, and then he motions to the onlooking pirates above:

> "Before a pirate takes off on a voyage, he takes a farewell toast. All of yer shipmates are here to see ye off. Bottoms up!" With that, George drains his own glass, as do the other pirates.

The glasses contain strong rum, and the PCs are free to drink or not. Those who do are lashed by Gauntlet George and the bartender who yell, "And just who said ye could drink on duty? And who said ye were pirates yet? Get ye through the door, ye miserable landlubbers!"

Gauntlet George: AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; F6; hp 44; THAC0 15; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 12, C 12, I 12, W 13, Ch 10; ML 14; XP 120; chain mail, whip, dagger, belaying pin. George's henchmen have the same statistics except that each is F4, THAC0 17, with 30 hp.

The observing pirates get a good laugh at this cruel trick. PCs who resist the beating are indeed shot by several crossbowmen up above. PCs may flee the beating by running through the door to the north, but Gauntlet George and his bartender get in at least one good lick apiece. They do not beat PCs who do not drink. (George remarks, "Well here's one with something inside that thick skull!")

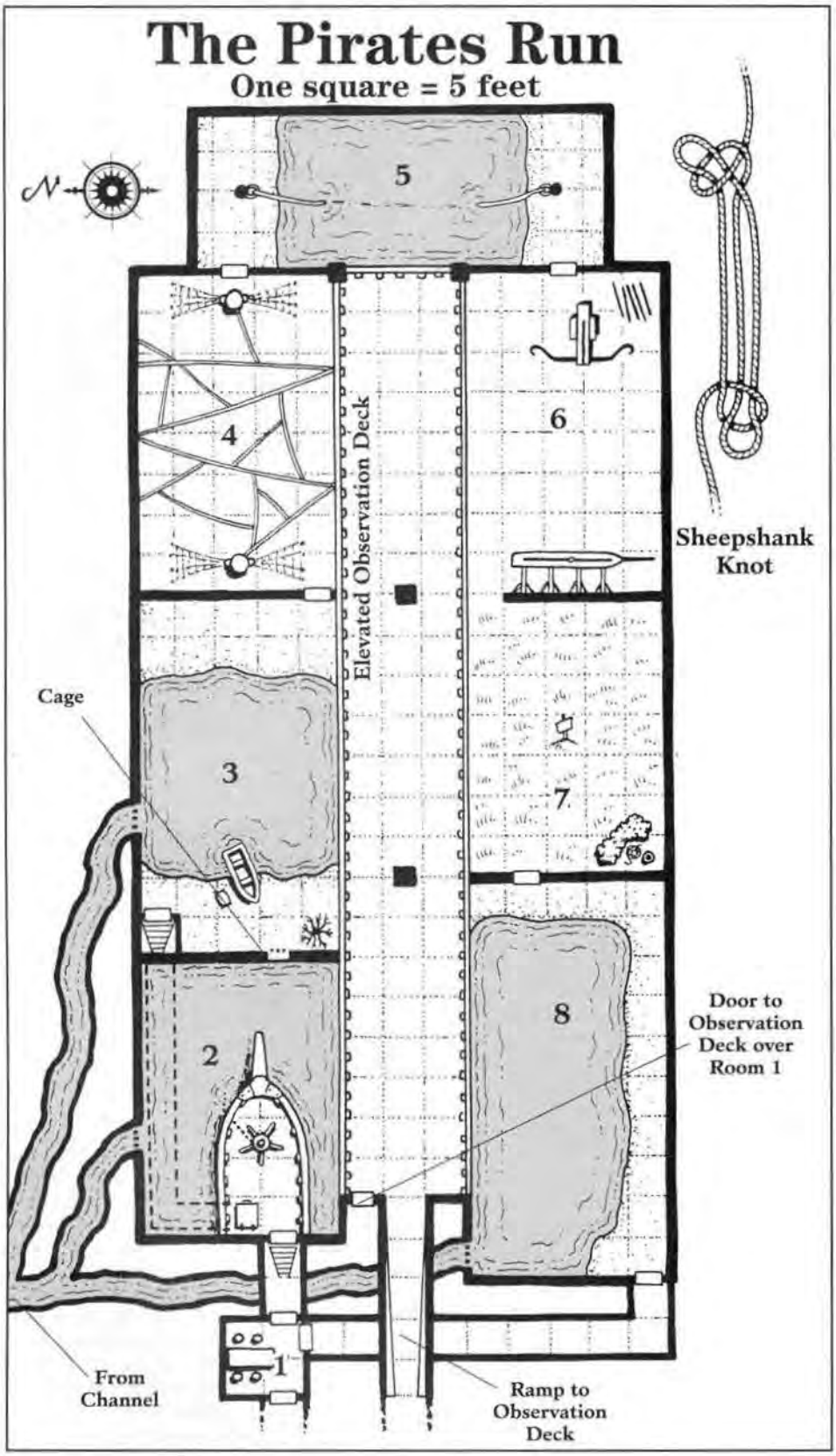
Besides the beating, PCs who drained their glass get a little woozy from the rum and suffer a –1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency or ability checks for the next six turns. Drinking less than the full glass imposes a penalty for a lesser time (DM's call, based on how much was drunk). A kind DM might allow a saving throw vs. paralyzation to negate this effect.

Station 2: Anchor Hauling Exercise.

> Wooden stairs lead up to the replica of a ship's bow and a capstan with five spokes. Attached to the capstan is an anchor chain, and nearby is an iron bar to put through the links of the chain and into a hole in the deck to secure the chain once the anchor is raised up. Gauntlet George is now watching from the gallery above. He yells out, "Avast, ye lubbers. Haul up this light anchor and secure it well. Look lively, now!"

It takes a combined Strength of 65 to haul up the "light" anchor with no problems. For every Strength point under 65, there is a 15% chance that the PCs cannot budge the anchor or raise it up any farther. Only five PCs can turn the capstan at any one time. A sixth PC can cheer his shipmates on or watch the anchor come up to determine when it is in place at the side of the ship. It takes three successful turns of the capstan to raise the anchor all the way up.

After the second successful turn, any PC watching the chain sees a giant octopus wrapped around the rising



anchor. Unless the PCs release the anchor immediately, the octopus climbs up on the deck and attacks fearlessly. Releasing the anchor requires each PC on the capstan to release his respective spoke at the same time. Failure of a Dexterity check (+1 bonus) indicates that the spoke of the capstan smacks the PC for 1d6 hp damage. When the anchor is released in this way, it plummets back down to the bottom of the pool (30' deep) and there is a base 10% chance that it knocks the octopus off. For each hp damage that the octopus receives, this chance is increased by 1%. Note that the octopus suffers no damage from the fall back into the water. Other ingenious options include casting *heat metal* or *grease* on the anchor to make the octopus let go.

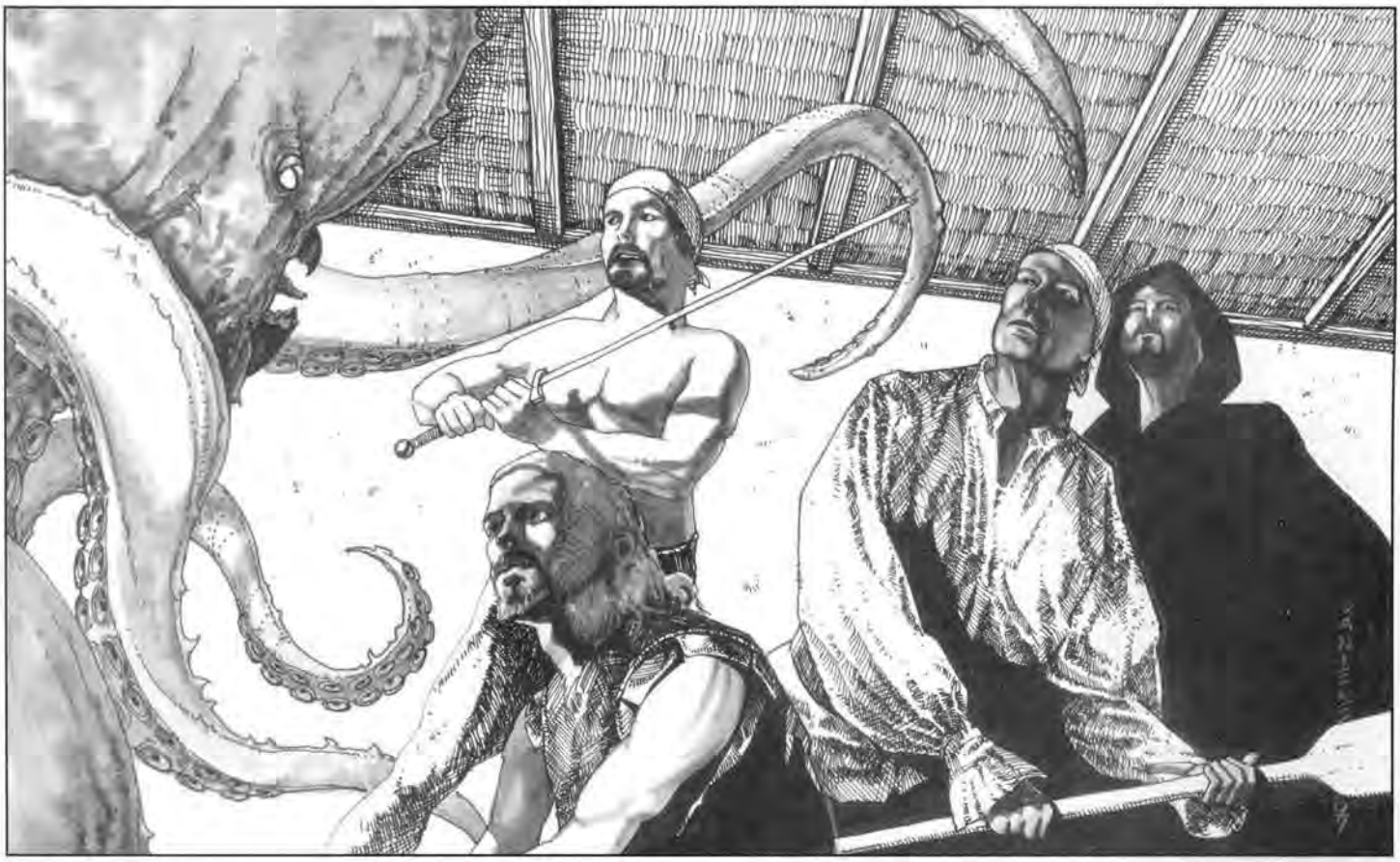
Giant Octopus: INT animal; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 3, swim 12; HD 8; hp 52; THAC0 13; #AT 7; Dmg 1–4 (×6); 2–12; SA constriction; SD ink; SZ L (12' across); ML 13; XP 2,000; *MM*/271.

Once the anchor is secured, a henchman shows up and directs the PCs down a trap door to a tube that goes under the pool and then rises up to station **3.**

Station 3: Cargo Handling. The PCs emerge by a sandy beach. On it is a sack of grain next to a longboat, which rests in a pool of water. About 40' to the north is another sandy beach on the other side of the pool. In the southern wall is a recessed cage; a bobcat sits outside on the beach, pawing at the cage. Once the PCs move toward the cat, it leaps up on to a nearby short dead tree, where it snarls and spits at the heroes. The cage contains four large rats. Next to the cage is a sign:

> All pirates must be good cargo handlers. On this side of the water are three cargoes: a bobcat that a pirate lord wants as a pet, four rats that a wizard needs for experiments, and a sack of grain for your shipmates. Use the boat to move the cargo from this beach to the other beach. You can move only one cargo at a time, and you must all accompany the cargo safely to the other side.

This is an opportunity for the PCs to use several spells or proficiencies. *Charm mammal* is one means of controlling the bobcat, and *sleep* or *color spray* would also come in handy with either the bobcat or rats. Another method makes use of



the fishing proficiency (using a pike to spear one of the several dogfish that live in the water). Giving a dogfish to the bobcat or rats keeps them occupied.

If they brought a sack, the PCs could usher the rats into it. An inventive PC might be able to fashion a sack from a shirt or pair of pants, although it is ruined by the end of this station. Such an item, however, does not hold the bobcat. Unless the feline is incapacitated somehow, it takes at least three PCs to hold on to it. Note that the rats' cage is built into the wall and cannot be removed. Its flimsy door holds the rats, but not the bobcat.

Bobcat: INT animal; AL N; AC 5; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2/1–2/1–2; SA rear claws rake 1–2/1–2; SZ S (2' tall); ML 10; XP 35; *MM*/38.

Large rats (4): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; HD 1/4; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA disease; SZ T (1' long); ML 4; XP 7 each; *MM*/300.

The best solution involves keeping the rats away from the grain and the bobcat away from the rats. (The bobcat will kill the rats and the rats will eat the grain.) Some possible solutions:

- ❖ PCs take rats across to the north shore.
- ❖ PCs return to south shore and take the bobcat.
- ❖ PCs take bobcat to north shore, drop it off (but first pick up rats), and take the rats back to south shore. The pirates laugh and point at PCs running around chasing the bobcat or rats.
- ❖ PCs drop rats off on south shore and take grain to north shore.
- ❖ PCs go back to south shore, collect the rats, and take them to north shore.

If the PCs fail in getting any of the cargo categories safely across to the other side, crossbowmen shoot one bolt at each PC. If the PCs succeed, a henchman shows up and has the PCs release the rats (which the bobcat promptly kills). Then he directs the PCs to the door to the next station.

Station 4: Climbing the Mast.

> On the other side of the door is a 20' tall mast. Rope ladders climb to the top, where a bewildering array of ropes stretch in various directions, but ultimately they appear to lead to an identical mast 60' away. Below the ropes are ferns and other jungle growth along with dozens of snakes that start slithering toward you.
>
> Gauntlet George yells out, "Well, let's see how good ye are on the ropes, mateys! I wouldn't want to get bit by them adders if I were ye!"

The snakes reach the base of the rope ladders in three rounds, just enough time for the PCs to climb up each side of the rope ladders. The snakes follow them up the ropes, but there are dozens on the ground. PCs have to climb up to the top of the mast, figure out which route among the ropes lead to the other side (requires an Intelligence check), and climb across. Because the PCs face almost certain death if they fall, the DM should allow them their best chance for getting over. This might require a climbing ability (rogue PCs), various nonweapon proficiencies (seamanship, rope use), or a Dexterity check. No one minds if a PC flies across or *levitates* up and merely goes through the ropes hand over hand. Likewise, no one minds if a wizard uses

Tenser's floating disc to ferry other PCs across. The pirates cheer the PCs or throw ale mugs at them as they're crossing. Safety lines can work if a PC has several, because the ropes intersect each other, and one line won't transfer from rope to rope.

Falling results in 3d6 hp damage from the fall, and the PC is attacked by 1d12 snakes. He can simply run to the north side of the area but is attacked by 1d6 additional snakes along the way.

Poisonous snakes (200): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (failure to save results in 3–12 hp damage in 1–6 rounds); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175 each; *MM*/430.

Station 5: Rope Use Station.

> On the south side of the beach is a mast with a rope tied in a large metal eyelet. The knot has been coated in some kind of tar, making it impossible to untie. The rope goes off into the water where it sags down below the surface. It comes up again on the north shore where it is tied to another mast. Tacked to the south mast is a note that reads: "Easy job here, mateys. Just get from this side of the canal to the other. You can use the rope if you want to, but you can't cut it. Swimming might not be too healthy, as the little varmints in the water are terrible hungry."

The pool contains about 200 piranha. Gauntlet George throws a bucket of bloody meat into the water, which puts the piranha in a boiling frenzy. In just one round, the meat is gone. George grins at the PCs and quips, "Well, we want to make sure they're not asleep on the occasion of yer crossing!"

Piranha (200): AC 8; MV swim 9; HD 1/4; THAC0 20; #AT 2 (in frenzy); Dmg 1–2; ML 6; XP 7 each; *MM*/117.

A PC with a successful rope use or seamanship proficiency check can recall that a sheepshank knot can shorten the rope without untying or cutting it (see diagram on page 48). Another solution is for a PC to use a pike to twist the rope several times, tightening it until it rises above the water line. The DM should allow PCs their best chance to cross the rope, as in the last station. This time because it is only one rope (and certain death in the event of failure), smart PCs can use their own rope (if they bothered to bring any) or belts to secure themselves with safety lines.

Once the PCs are safely past the piranha, one of George's henchmen shows up and hurries them on to the next station.

Station 6: Shipboard Artillery (Pirate Roulette).

In this area is a medium ballista with five bolts. At the southern end of the area is a wooden mock-up of a sailing ship. The ship has eight bullseyes painted on it in various locations. Two of George's henchmen approach the PCs and grab the two burliest PCs (those with the highest Strength) and take them behind the ship. Out of sight of the others, they gag and tie up the two PCs and place them behind two of the bullseyes. Gauntlet George then states:

> "Well here is a test of faith and skill. Two of yer companions are tied up behind some targets. I'll tell ye which to shoot at. If yer good, ye'll hit the target and miss yer comrades!"

The ballista has brackets on the sides and top to ensure that it shoots only at the mock-up. Gauntlet George yells out a target (e.g., "Ballista Crew, target number one, Fire!") and the PC gunner shoots. The PC gunner needs to hit AC 8, but if none of the PCs are proficient with a ballista, they shoot with a penalty (Table 34, *PHB*). A hit indicates that the designated target is hit. A miss indicates that some other target is hit. The DM determines randomly if it is one where a PC is tied up. Example: A 6th-level PC Thief takes a shot at target #5. His THAC0 is 18. To hit AC 8, he needs a 10 or better. He rolls an 11, but because he is not proficient with a ballista, his roll suffers a –3 adjustment, making it an 8. He misses. The DM determines that the other PCs are tied up behind targets 3 and 8. He rolls a 1d8, to indicate which target was hit. If the DM were to roll a 5 (the original target), the bolt hits somewhere between the bulls-eyes.

Hit PCs scream in pain as they suffer 3–18 hp damage, and the pirates in the gallery cheer wildly and laugh. After each shot, the gunner rotates, and captive PCs are put behind new targets. All five bolts are shot. Gauntlet George never designates a target where the PCs are hidden. It is only when the gunner misses that there is a chance of a PC being hit. Those PCs who are reduced to 0 hp or less are moved to a new target anyway. If they bleed to death, it is of no concern to the pirates.

Station 7: Dividing the Loot. This area is full of 2' tall grass with a sign right in the middle that reads, "Treasure Right Here!" Beside the sign are two shovels. A bush is in the southeast corner of the area. After a few rounds of digging, the PCs uncover a small wooden chest (untrapped) secured by a rusty lock. A rogue PC can Open Locks (normal chance), or the lock may be broken after a few solid whacks with a shovel.

Inside the chest are some gold pieces and a note. The note reads, "Be sure to divide the treasure equally among all yer shipmates." The amount in the chest depends on how many PCs are going through the Gauntlet:

# PCs	# Pirates	gp
3	39	42
4	36	40
5	35	40
6	36	42

The gold pieces should not be divided equally among the PCs. PCs who recall Gauntlet George's words ("All of yer shipmates are here to see ye off.") will divide the gold among the pirates in the gallery and themselves (i.e., one gp each). The PCs can keep one gp each and throw the rest up to George in a sack or pouch, and George asks, "Now what do ye want me to be doin' with this here treasure, mateys?" The PCs have to state that it is to be split among all the pirates. Another subtle clue is that there is a basket and rope hidden behind the bush in the southeast corner. The coins can be put in there and the rope thrown up for pirates to haul it up.

PCs who figure this puzzle out are cheered by the pirates. (It costs them 2 gp admission fee to witness the Run.) If they get part of their admission price back, they are happy.

PCs who divide the treasure among themselves anger the pirates. It is at this point that each pirate in the gallery throws a dagger at the PCs. The DM should just roll the number of attack rolls consistent with the number of pirates, but omit one roll (Nosasha intentionally misses). Assume the pirates have a base THAC0 of 18 for these attacks and divide the attacks as evenly as possible among the PCs. Note that the tall grass negates any Dexterity bonus that the PC would otherwise have. Each dagger inflicts 1–4 hp damage.

A kind DM can give an additional

clue by Nosasha standing up in the gallery shaking his head "No" slightly if the PCs are about to split the treasure among themselves. A PC notices this if he makes an Intelligence check.

Station 8: Chow Time. A narrow earthen walkway stretches around the northern, eastern, and part of the southern wall. There is a pool of water in the center. When the lead PC reaches the eastern wall, a 10'-tall green-scaled humanoid bursts from the water. Slimy black hair reaches down around his eyes and covers most of his pointed ears. He crooks a clawed finger at the PCs and rubs his pot belly with his other hand. He cries out in broken common, "Yes, yes, it's chow time! Right dis way! Belzok be hungry! Right dis way!"

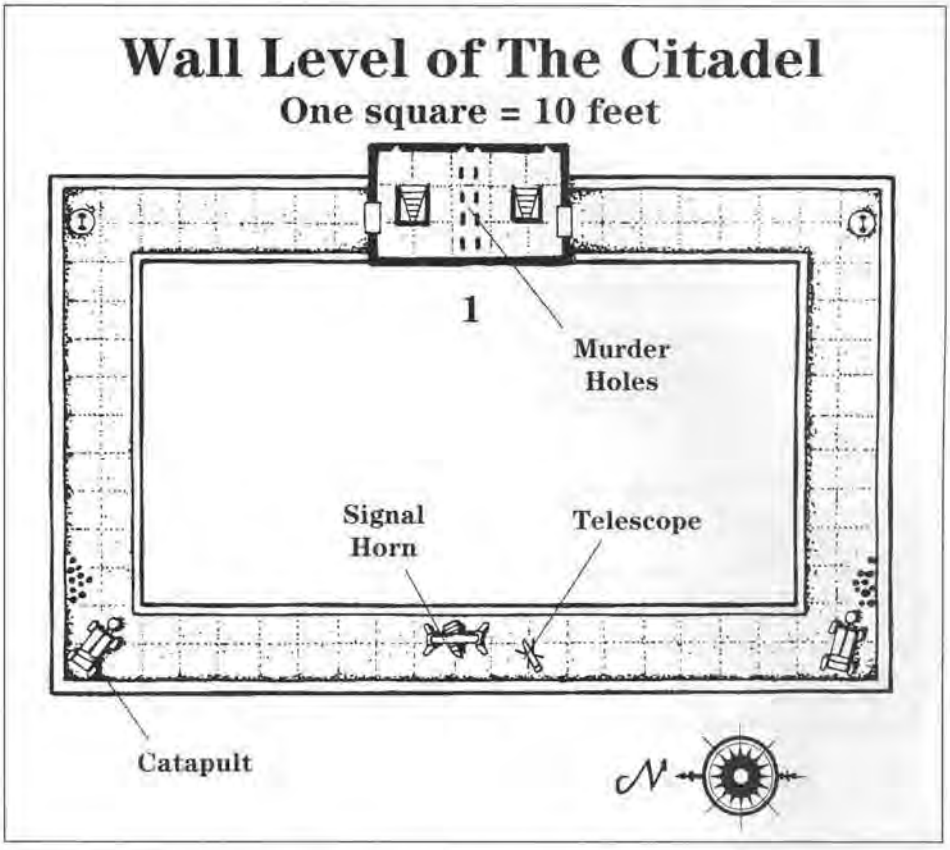
Belzok the saltwater scrag eats anybody (except Gauntlet George and his whip-wielding companions) who tries to get past the door or attacks him. But he is under orders to let anyone pass who gives him some "good" food. Of course, Belzok does not reveal these instructions.

There are a couple of ways to deal with Belzok. The hard way is to kill him or reduce him to unconsciousness. Belzok does not leave the saltwater pool, as it gives him the ability to regenerate 3 hp per round.

Another way to deal with Belzok is to offer him food. Offering him fish (like piranha or dogfish) does not work ("Yark! Me eats fish all de' time! Tired of fish!"), but he is fond of octopus (station **2**) and snakes (station **4**). Giving Belzok large chunks of the giant octopus or snakes (one chunk or snake per PC) serves as an adequate toll. A gruesome solution might occur if the PCs suffered a casualty and feed Belzok the body of their companion. Although that allows the PCs to reach the door, it does not overcome any alignment penalties the DM may think are appropriate. Finally, an ingenious PC may cast *create food and water*. Without seasonings, Belzok spits the magical food out ("Yuck! What is dis pasty stuff?").

Belzok (scrag): INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, swim 15; HD 6+12; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/9–16; SD regenerates 3 hp/round in salt water; SZ L (10'); ML 16; XP 1,400; *MM*/349–50 (troll).

If the PCs finish the Pirates' Run successfully, they return to station **1** where they are cheered and given a free shot of rum. Then they go off to Chen's (area **10**) to get a tattoo. Those PCs who were especially clever are wooed by several pirate captains as crewmen. Nosasha is also there, and PCs may use this opportunity to give the recognition signal to him.



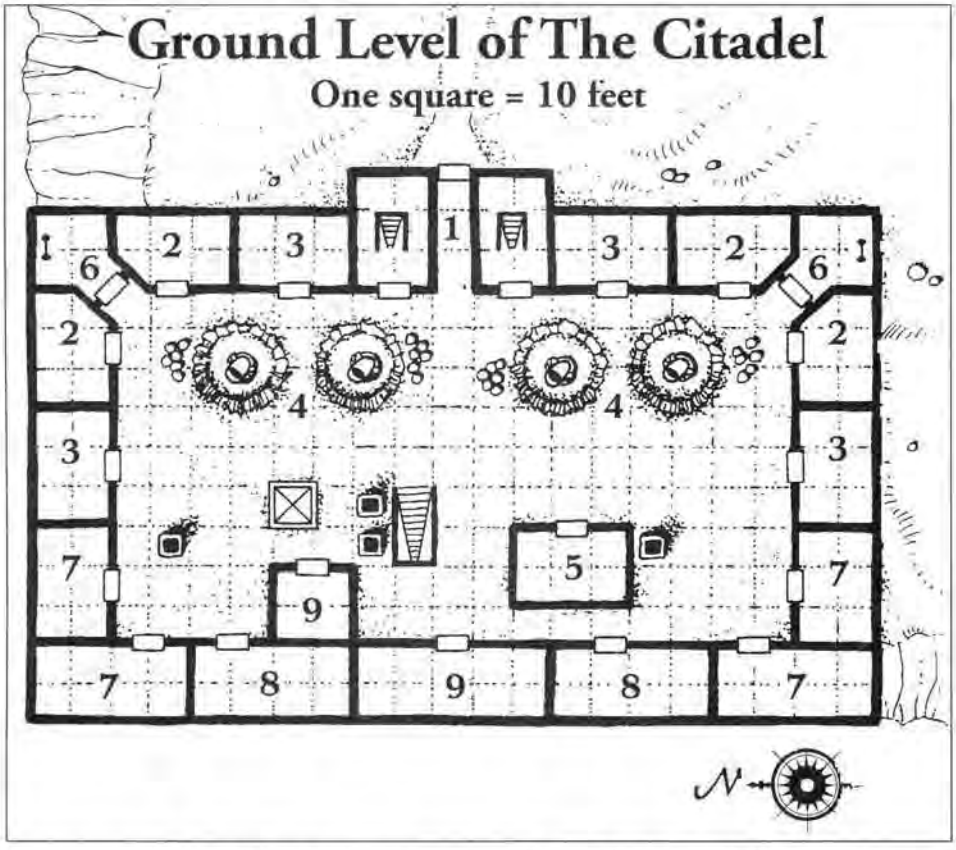
The Citadel of Immurk's Hold

The PCs must have a reasonable excuse to enter the citadel openly. Because of the Thayvian bombards and their sensitive ammunition, entry is tightly restricted to those who work or have business there. Unless they have joined the citadel guards by getting through Pirates' Run (or devised another clever way to talk their way in), the guards turn them away. The only other option is to infiltrate the place.

When they make contact with Manta Ray, the PCs discover that he wants them to help retrieve his wife, Amarella, who also lives in the Citadel. Nosasha is not sure whether she will leave with him once she learns that he is really a spy. He wants her to come with him, and he implores the PCs to help talk her into leaving, even if it means having to *charm* her.

Another reason to enter the Citadel is to create a diversion during any escape attempts. Manta Ray suggests this if the PCs don't think of it. The best diversion is to set off all the explosive flame fluid of the bombards. It is sure to blow most of the fortress away, and the pirates will never know who it was that gave them away. This plan works best if the PCs have signed on as citadel guards (after surviving Pirates' Run, of course). Manta Ray insists that Amarella be rescued before it blows.

1. Gatehouse. A well-maintained road leads from Immurk's Hold to the only entry to the citadel. The pirates have never dreamed of a land assault so there is no moat or portcullis, only a pair of huge barred doors. A garrison of 30 soldiers live in barracks on the ground floor. Ten soldiers are on duty at any one time, with four at the gatehouse itself and six others patrolling the walls. The 10' passageway leading through the gatehouse into the citadel has a magical archway like the three in the city. Whenever the alert is given, ten of the soldiers man the two heavy catapults on the walls. These machines



supplement the fire of the bombards.

Sergeants (3): AL any evil or neutral; AC 4; MV 12; F4; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; ML 14; XP 175; chain mail, shield, long bow and 20 arrows, long sword, dagger. The sergeants have 1–6 gp and 3–30 sp.

Corporal (3): Same statistics as sergeants except they are F3, with THAC0 18, 21 hp, and 120 XP. The corporals carry 2–20 sp.

Privates (8 F2s and 16 F1s): Same statistics as sergeants and corporals, except that F2s have THAC0 19, 14 hp, and 65 XP. F1s have THAC0 20, 7 hp, and 35 XP. Each has 1–10 sp.

Large Catapults (2): Range 24/48; THAC0 16; Dmg 3d10; ROF 1/16; Crew 5; SZ G.

2. Ogre Quarters. Each of the four bombards in the courtyard is manned by a crew of five ogres. The pirates use these monsters because their strength is helpful in handling the heavy ammunition and kegs of flame fluid, as well as traversing and elevating the massive bombards. Each ogre has a ball of wax (to put in his ears when firing the bombards), a big knotty club, 1–3 gp, and 4–40 sp. In the event of a ground assault, the ogres provide a fearsome reaction force. Their quarters are filthy, smelly lairs.

Ogres (20, 5 per crew): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 25 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (+6); SA +3 to hit due to Strength; SZ L (9'+); ML 12; XP 270 each; *MM*/272.

3. Ammunition Bunkers. Each of these areas contain the huge 5' diameter hollow stone balls fired by the bombards. Each ball has a plug that is removed for filling with Thayvian flame fluid prior to firing. Each bunker contains 20 of these projectiles. They are imported from Thay at great cost to the pirates.

4. Bombards. Each of these war engines is a 5' long, 5' diameter squat tube located in a 20' wide pit. Each bombard sits on a free turning base that is marked with 360° marks and has a hand-screw mechanism that elevates the bombard from 45° to 85°. Within the pit is a set of equipment: signal flags, a sturdy metal half-pipe that is 2' wide and 7' long, a hooded lantern illuminated by a *continual light* spell, and cleaning/swabbing equipment. By each bombard lie six stone projectiles. Once these are expended, the ogres must retrieve more from the closest ammunition bunker.

Each bombard fires a fluid-filled ball up to 480 yards away (minimum range 120 yards). The pirates have discovered that a hollow ball can be fired up to twice this distance. Damage from a flame-filled projectile is devastating: it explodes on impact, inflicting 10d6 hp damage to everyone on deck and igniting all flammables (wood, sails, rope). On a hit, a hollow ball has a 50% chance of crashing through the deck and hull. If it does not hit the deck, it snaps off a mast.

The ogres and their human signalers go through an involved procedure to fire the bombards. There is a considerable amount of flag-waving, pouring flame fluid into the stone balls and bombard, and adjusting the elevation and deflection. Finally the cry goes up, "Fire in the hole!" and the projectile explodes out of the bombard with a mighty blast that is heard miles away. Those within 70 feet and without hearing protection are deafened for 1d6 turns, and there is a 10% chance that the hearing loss is permanent (20–100% per ear).

Although bombards are reputedly inaccurate, the training, daily crew drill, and coordination between the bombard crews and signalers make these engines very deadly. Against a stationary target, each has a 60% chance of hitting a vessel. Against a moving target, each has a 30% chance. Normally, bombards have a rate of fire of one shot per 18 rounds, but these bombards can fire once every 10 rounds.

5. Flame Fuel Storage. Hundreds of barrels containing highly volatile Thayvian flame fuel are stored here. The building has 3'-thick walls and ceiling and is clearly marked with a sign forbidding fires or metal of any sort. An ogre always guards the door when the bombards are idle. PCs who want to create a diversion can do so by setting the interior ablaze. The only trick is to get away before it explodes (Manta Ray warns the PCs of this danger). One turn after a barrel of flame fuel is lit, the building blows up spectacularly. Anyone within 100 feet dies instantly. Those between 100 and 200 feet away are knocked down and suffer 20d6 hp dam-

age (save vs. breath for half damage). Everyone within 300 feet of the explosion suffers 3d6 hp damage from falling debris (save vs. breath for half damage). Fleeing to a lower level is not a good idea, as the ceilings in the next level down cave in, killing anyone who happens to be in that area.

PCs who manage to take kegs of flame fuel with them can later sell them for 200 gp each or use them in combat. A single keg explodes for 10d6 hp damage.

6. Signalers. Each of these rooms holds sturdy bunks and other furniture. Citadel signalers trained in observing targets, estimating range, computing how each bombard should be laid, and making adjustments. Two signalers are on duty at all times, and they man a powerful telescope (×6, value 2,000 gp). They also blow the large horn that alerts the citadel, order the chain raised/lowered, or call out the ramships, malenti, and whales. Each signaler has paper, pen, ink, charts for computing flame fuel charges, a set of flags for signaling to the bombard crews, a ×3 telescope (value 500 gp), and a *continual light* lantern.

Chief Signalers (2): AL any evil or neutral; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; ML 12; XP 65; leather armor, club.

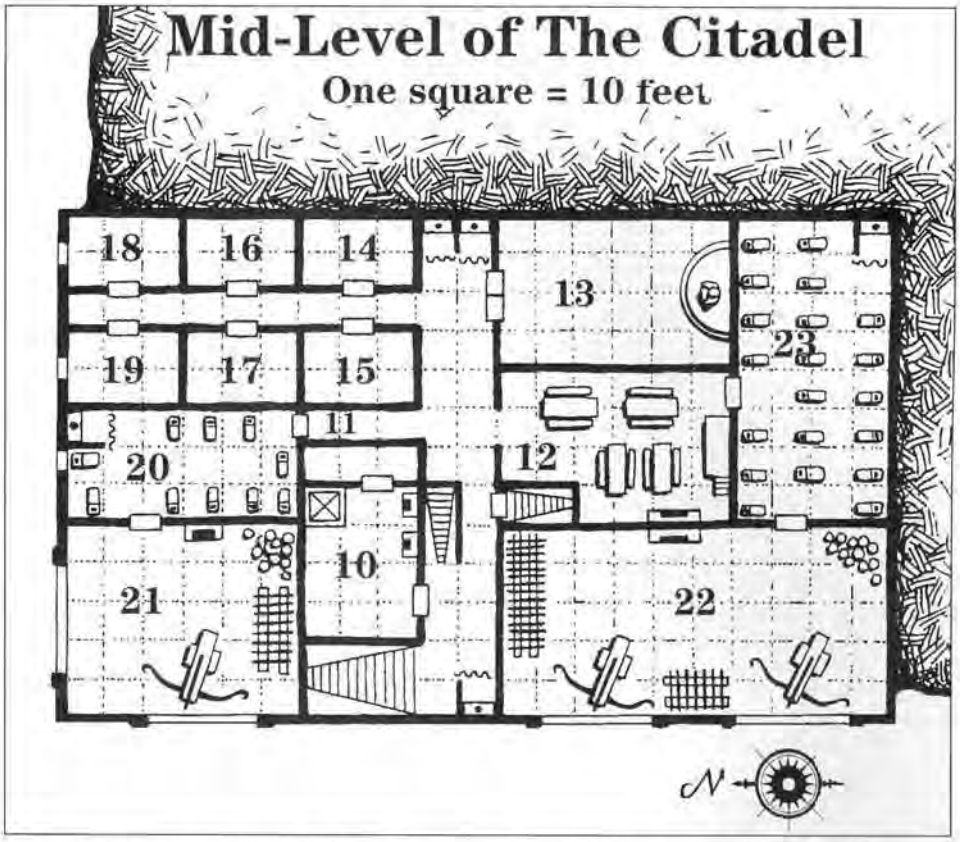
Signalers (8): Same as the chief signalers except they are F2's and have 12 hp, THAC0 19, and 35 XP.

Because of their mathematical skills, the signalers do the best gambling in the citadel and in town. Each one has 2d10 gp, 1d6 ep, and 3d10 sp. The money is kept in small locked chests in their quarters.

7. Quarters. This room contains bunks for the thirty teamsters and muleskinners who bring in supplies, transport out waste, and haul flame fuel. During an alert, they move their wagons to the flame fuel storage area, load up kegs of fuel, and take it to the bombards.

Teamsters & Muleskinners (30): AL any evil or neutral; AC 9; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; ML 9; XP 7 each. Each wears padded armor, carries a club, and has 1–6 sp.

8. Stables. A dozen mules and carts haul supplies, flame fuel, food, and other miscellaneous items. All of the fittings for the animals' tack are made of leather. The mules are cantankerous



around strangers, although they act favorably to anyone offering them carrots, apples, or other treats. In the far northern stable are two medium warhorses and two light riding horses. The warhorses belong to the Citadel Commander and the Harbormaster, while the light riding horses belong to the two clerics.

Medium warhorses (2): INT animal; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 21 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/1–6; SZ L; ML 12; AL N; XP 65 each; *MM*/194.

Mules (12): INT animal; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1–2/1–6; SZ M (4' tall); ML 7; AL N; XP 65 each; *MM*/194.

9. Supply Rooms. Food, fresh water, rope, and other supplies are kept in these rooms. Food and water for daily use are winched down to the kitchen in the elevator just west of the bombards.

Mid-Level

Stairs descend 30' before reaching the first level below ground. The corridors are all lit by *continual light* lanterns.

10. Kitchen. Two large ovens and a host of cooking equipment adorn this large kitchen manned by six cooks. They defend themselves with rolling pins and meat cleavers. In the northeast corner is an area to receive the elevator that comes from the courtyard.

Cooks (6): AL any evil or neutral; AC 10; MV 12; F3; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (rolling pin) or 1–5 (cleaver); ML 12; XP 65. The cooks have no treasure.

11. Storeroom. This room has a permanent temperature of 35°F (courtesy of a pirate wizard) and keeps meats and vegetables fresh for several days. It is filled with hanging sides of beef, boxes of fresh vegetables and fruits from outlying farms, and other foodstuffs requiring refrigeration.

12. Mess Hall. This large room is where the citadel garrison eats its three meals, plus a midnight hot soup for those on late watch. On the far south side is a small stage for visiting bards and other entertainers. The harbormaster tries to hire an entertainer or two once a week to keep troop morale up, and this might be a way for PCs to get into the citadel to scope things out. This room is also a place where troops can

relax and have a good time when not on duty. Except during the latest hours, there is a 60% chance that 1–8 inhabitants are down here playing cards, rolling dice, or throwing darts. Targets for the darts look like paladins and soldiers of Cormyr, Sembia, and other coastal nations.

13. Chapel. The Harbormaster worships the goddess Loviatar and has erected a temple dedicated to her. A stunning bronze likeness of the goddess stand upon a dais along with a brazier, several whips, and other cruel looking instruments. Not only is it a place of worship, but it is the spot where the priestess and her acolyte (area **14**) administer discipline to disobedient or unruly soldiers. Only 10% of the garrison actually worship here, but all off-duty troops are required to witness punishment. This is an unusual occurrence, as everyone strives to obey orders and avoid this place. The ogres are a little slow on this point and have been the victims more than anyone else. It would not take more than a *suggestion* spell to convince them to hurl the priestess and her acolyte off the walls, but they won't do it on their own. The statue has a small enchantment on it: any non-evil creature that touches it suffers 1d10 hp damage, and whatever body part touched the statue is paralyzed and useless for 2d20 turns (save vs. paralyzation to avoid this effect, but not the damage).

14. Quarters of the Pains. There are two hard metal beds in here which belong to the pains Enolive and Mensarea, specialty priestesses of Loviatar who manage the chapel. A locked chest contains offerings to the chapel (29 gp, 37 sp, 54 cp). Both clerics are here at night, sleeping; otherwise they administer punishment or conduct rituals in the chapel (30% chance) or wander about the citadel trying to find someone disobeying orders (70%). They usually remain in their ceremonial armor until 11:00 P.M. as they stay up late discussing who should be scourged for what on the following day.

Enolive: AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; P11; hp 60; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 15, C 15, I 13, W 16, Ch 14; SA spells, *pain touch* 4/day (successful hit on victim inflicts –4 penalty to attack and –2 to Dexterity checks for 10 rounds); ML 18; XP 4,000; *ceremonial scale mail +1*, flail, *white wand* that absorbs up to 5 levels of spells cast at holder, jewelry worth 600 gp, silver holy symbol. Spells: *bless, command* (×2), *faerie fire* (×2), *cause light wounds; aid, charm person or mammal* (×2), *heat metal; hold person, silence 15' radius; cause blindness, prayer, summon insects; free action, cause serious wounds, cure serious wounds; flame strike, slay living.*

Mensarea: AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; P3; hp 25; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 10, C 16, I 14, W 17, Ch 16; SA spells, *pain touch* 1/day; ML 15 (18 while Enolive stands); XP 120; ceremonial scale mail, whip, flail, jewelry worth 200 gp, iron holy symbol. Spells: *command, faerie fire, cause light wounds* (×2); *chill metal, hold person, silence 15' radius.*

15. Conference Room. This room is warded against all manner of scrying so that it can be used for secret meetings. Most of the time (80% chance), it is unoccupied except in the early morning when the Pains meet with the Harbormaster to discuss punishments for the day. At other hours, it might be a good place for the PCs to hide.

16. Nosasha's Room. A desk, chair, stand-up closet, chest of drawers, and a fur-lined bed provide the furnishings for the deputy harbormaster and his wife, Amarella. They are generally here in the evening hours, although sometimes (30% of the time) Amarella is out checking on the guards and inspecting the premises. During the rest of the day, Amarella helps the Citadel Captain run the garrison as his second in command.

The furs on the bed are worth 400 gp. Hanging from the walls are several paintings looted from various towns (total value 2,500 gp). In a locked chest in the corner are four gems worth 2,000 gp total, five pieces of jewelry worth 1,000 gp total, 188 gp, and 79 sp. In a secret niche in the wall is a code book that Nosasha used to encrypt his messages to the Sembians.

17. Citadel Captain's Quarters. Belstut Promeer, the citadel's captain, lives in this modest room that has only a bed and two large sea chests. In these chest are ordinary belongings, a telescope (×4, value 1,000 gp), and a bag with 250 gp and 44 sp. Belstut rises early, goes to bed late, and rarely takes a vacation. When he does (twice a year), he goes to town and disappears in a bordello for a solid week. He is a large, grim red-bearded man who believes in discipline and order. He attacks first and asks questions later.

Belstut Promeer: AL LE; AC –1; MV 12; F8; hp 75; THAC0 13; #AT by weapon type; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 15, I 13, W 15, Ch 12; SA specialized with cutlass (+1 to hit, +2 damage; attacks 2/per round); ML 17; XP 2,000; *chain mail +3*, shield, *cutlass +1*, dagger, long bow, five *sheaf arrows +2*, 15 normal sheaf arrows.

18. Harbormaster's Office. This office has a nice desk, chairs, and a map of the entire Sea of the Fallen Stars area. This is where Pencilo Windrag, the one-eyed chief harbormaster (Nosasha's boss), works during the day. The desk is full of correspondence, bills, work orders, and other mundane things. One of the stones lifts up to reveal a set of stairs going to a small room below. In it are two chests, both locked and *firetrapped* (1d4+10 hp damage). They contain the operating funds for the citadel's expenses and payroll: 450 pp, 500 gp, 209 ep, and 1,233 sp. In a secret compartment in the lid of one of the chests is Pencilo's private stash: 8 gems worth 3,600 gp.

19. Harbormaster's Quarters: This room contains a bed with a goose-down mattress, pillows, and several furs (value 2,000 gp). There is also a standup closet with fine clothes and a chest of drawers. The Harbormaster, Pencilo, typically turns in early every night and enjoys a life of comfort, leaving the citadel's management to Nosasha and the citadel captain. It is an easy job, although Pencilo worries about whispers that the leaks to the Sembians come from his office.

If attacked, he defends himself until he has lost 50% of his hit points, at which point he throws down his weapons, surrenders, and cries for mercy. At heart, Pencilo is a coward and gladly leaves with the PCs to tell the Sembians anything they want to know.

Pencilo Windrag: AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; T10; hp 47; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 13; SA backstabs for ×4 damage; thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 40%, FRT 45%, MS 80%, HS 70%, DN 50%, CW 75%, RL 85%; ML 10; XP 3,000;

leather armor +1, dagger +2 (poisoned blade; Type E), *ring of protection +1.*

Pencilo has a pet monkey named Marty who sits on his shoulder when he walks around the town; otherwise, Marty stays in the room. This monkey is trained to act very scared if an intruder comes in the room. At the first opportunity, he stabs an intruder in the back of the leg with a hat pin that is hidden behind the closet. Failure to save vs. the poison results in the victim's leg being paralyzed for 2d20 turns, reducing the victim's movement rate by half.

Marty (monkey): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison needle; SZ S; ML 7; XP 65; *MM*/244.

20. Artillerists' Quarters. Ten artillerists reside in this barracks which has bunks and chests for personal belongings. They man and maintain the large ballistae in areas **21-22**.

Artillerists (10): AL any evil or neutral; AC 7; MV 12; F4, F3, and F2 (×8); hp 28, 22, 15 (×8); THAC0 17, 18, 19; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; ML 14; XP 175; studded leather armor, short sword, dagger. Each artillerist has 1–3 gp and 2–20 sp.

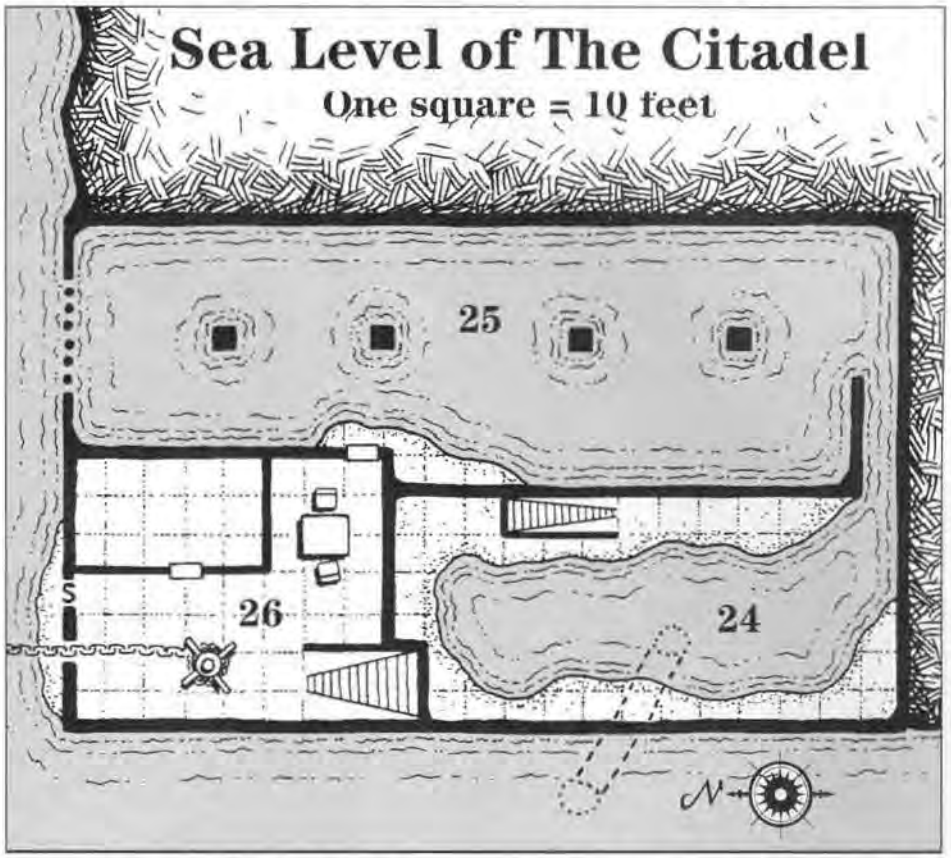
21. Large Ballista Station. A large ballista on wheels is the prominent feature of this room. It causes 3d10/3d12 damage and has ranges of 2/12/24/39 with a rate of fire of 1/16 rounds. This machine, along with those in area **22**, provides missile fire against close targets. Along the southern wall is a rack with 25 large bolts, and next to it are barrels of oil (normal) to make flaming missiles. A fireplace in the eastern wall provides the flame. It takes a minimum of four artillerists to run the ballista.

22. Large Ballistae Station. This room is identical to room **21** except that it is larger and accommodates two large ballistae.

23. Artillerists' Quarters. This room is the same as room **20** except that there are twice as many artillerists quartered here.

Sea Level

From the middle level, large stone stairs twist down to the lowest part of the citadel. They lead to area **26.** A normal-sized set of stairs descends to area



24. The ceilings on this level are 30' tall; the water is 45' deep.

24. Malenti Pool. The malenti patrol underwater and control the killer whales that guide in vessels entering the harbor. They like to be left alone, and if bothered without cause, they attack viciously. If they can get away with posing as aquatic elves in order to attack with surprise, they do so. Typically there are only a dozen in this chamber here at any one time as the rest are on patrol.

Malenti (40): Same statistics as those given on page 43.

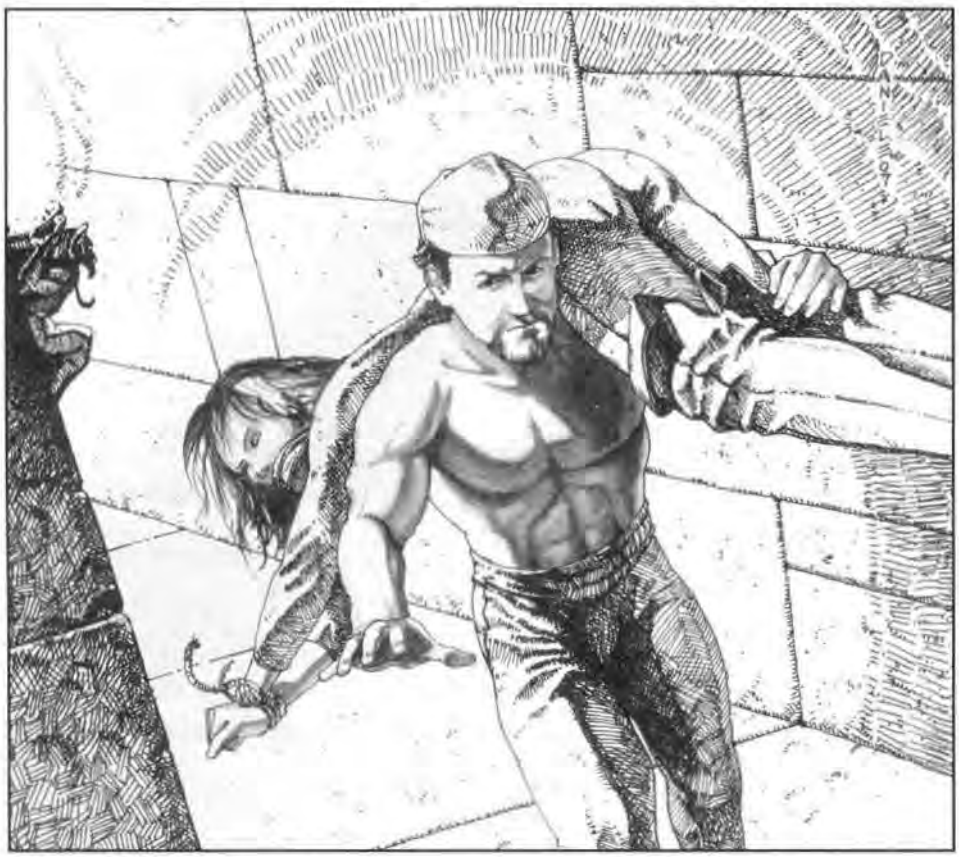
25. Whale Pens. One of the malenti possesses a rare item: a *ring of whale control* that enables the wearer to befriend up to 10 whales. When they joined the pirates, the malenti brought their killer whales with them, and they have been a happy addition to the pirate defenses. Four stay in the pens, while the rest patrol with the malenti.

Killer Whales (8): Same statistics as those given on page 43.

26. Harbor Chain Keepers. A huge capstan in the middle of the floor attaches to the great chain that secures the harbor. The two guardians of the chain are hill giants, Brutog and Glump. They are not overly bright but are fed well (sometimes with unruly prisoners) and recognize the horn signals for raising and lowering the chain.

In one corner stands a giant-sized, bloodstained table and two chairs. The giants are not the neatest of eaters: there are lots of bones beneath the furniture. In a corner are several barrels of ale for Brutog and Glump to wash down their grisly meals. A separate sleeping chamber has several furs and old mattresses which are full of lice and other vermin. The furs have no value. A secret door leads out to a small beach to the north where the Harbormaster or his assistant can check on the chain; it is also where the pirates deliver their daily quotas of ale to the thirsty giants.

Fast-talking PCs can talk their way past the giants with a good reaction check (the giants have been here for 10 years and have learned rudimentary Common), but they can not be convinced to lower the chain unless the



right horn signal is blown. A bad reaction check means that the giants figure out that the PCs are not friends and thus eligible for the next meal.

Hill Giants (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 12+2; hp 79, 75; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 (+7); SA hurl rocks for 2–16 hp damage; SZ H (16' tall); ML 14; XP 3,000 each; *MM*/141. The two giants have four throwing rocks each along with 55 gp in assorted coins.

Getting Out of Immurk's Hold

Escaping should be as challenging as getting in. Dealing with Amarella, Nosasha's pirate wife, will be difficult. Although she loves her husband, she will not betray her pirate comrades and friends and does not hesitate to turn in the PCs. *ESP, detect lie,* and other spells may reveal this before the PCs get in serious hot water. If the PCs don't catch on, the DM should have Amarella alert the garrison while the PCs are penetrating the citadel. (If she does this in town, the PCs have practically no chance; they will have their hands full with the citadel garrison as it is). *Charm person* helps deal with Amarella if the PCs can overcome her half-elven magic resistance. Absent that, the PCs may have to deal with the knotty question of whether they should take her by force, and if so, how to smuggle her out.

Just sailing out is not so easy. If the PCs are posing as smugglers, their vessel is searched prior to departure by a 7th-level pirate mage with a *detect invisibility* spell (to ensure that no one leaves with contraband). The wizard is accompanied by a shore patrol (see page 46 for statistics). Furthermore, the PCs have to file a plan with the Secretary at Pirates' Hall to coordinate the lowering of the harbor chain. They have a tough time doing this if Nosasha is reported missing.

A good (and exciting) way to escape Immurk's Hold is to devise a plan to blow up the flame fuel for the Thayvian bombards. This spectacular explosion causes the entire pirate fleet to sortie out of the harbor as the pirate captains will think that Immurk's Hold is under attack. Further, all outlying patrols immediately come running in to town to defend the place. Amid the confusion, the PCs ought to be able to slip away and get back to Sembia.

Concluding the Adventure

Getting back with Nosasha should earn the PCs 25,000 XP as a story award, along with XP for monsters and NPCs defeated. If they manage to bring along Amarella, they should receive an additional 5,000 XP. If they manage to blow up the fortress of Immurk's Hold, the total XP award should increase to 50,000 XP.

Admiral Kilmer pays exactly what he has promised, but if the PCs are successful in destroying the fortress, he pays a bonus of 10,000 gp in gems.

There are a few problems that the PCs must deal with upon their return. First, each may be marked with a very distinctive tattoo. A high-level wizard can remove the tattoos for 250 gp each. If the PCs blew up the fortress or if they agree to become Sembian naval agents, Admiral Kilmer picks up this cost.

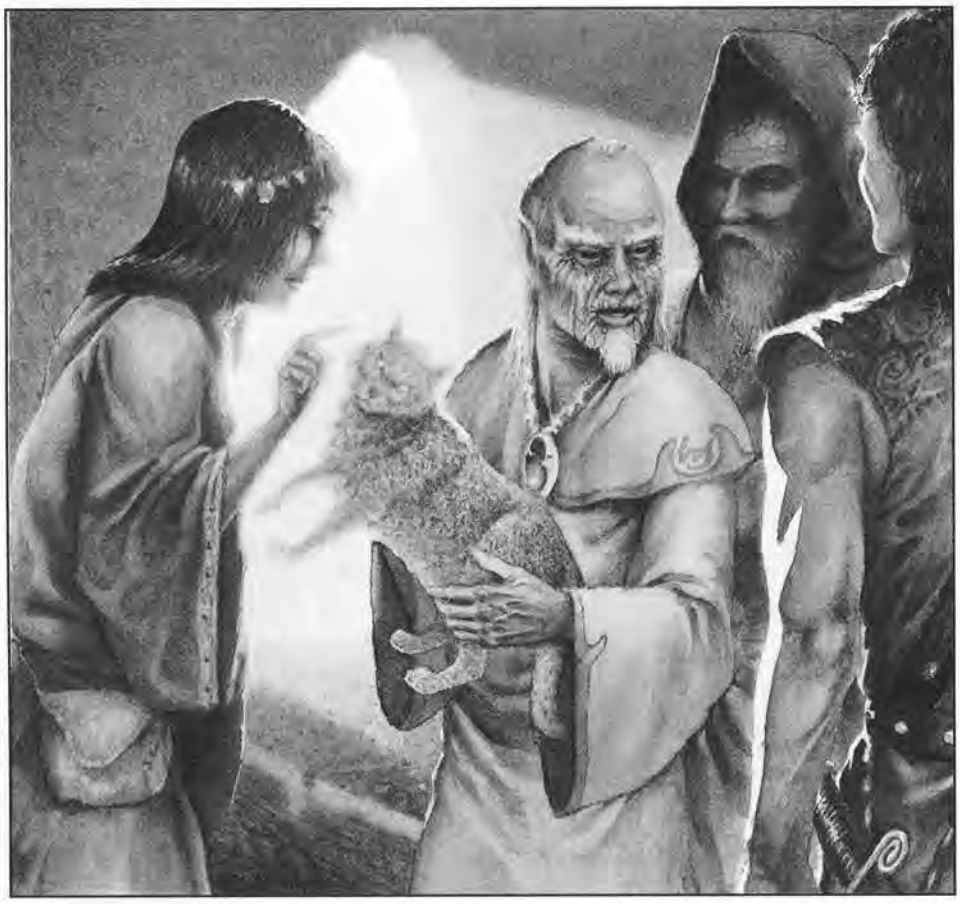
Bringing Amarella back can be the platform for a follow-up adventure. Eventually, someone in Yhaunn recognizes her as the former first mate of the notorious pirate vessel, the *Black Osprey* and, within an hour, Sembian marines are combing the streets looking for her. What will the PCs do when Nosasha comes running to the PCs, begging for help in saving his beloved from the gallows? Ω

Avast, ye scurvy dog!

Are ye lookin' to run adventures above or beneath the sea? How 'bout rules fer naval combat, or new magic for yer nautical mage?

Then best ye fetch **Of Ships and the Sea.** Know what awaits ye on the waves and in the deep!

Buy yer copy today! In stores now.



THE PETRIFYING PRIESTESS

BY BRIAN CORVELLO

Stone cold killers

Artwork by Bob Klasnich
Cartography by Michael Scott

Brian writes: "By the time you read this, I will be attending my first year at St. Thomas Aquinas College in New York. This, my first published module, would not have been possible if it weren't for several inspirations. I would like to thank my parents, who started me on the road to writing, my guidance counselor Rob Crawford for showing me that I should never give up, and my gaming buddies, Smoke and Kraal, for all their help. Thank you for believing in me."

"The Petrifying Priestess" is a generic AD&D® adventure for 5 or 6 good-aligned PCs of 5th–7th level (about 30 total levels). A good warrior and one or more spell-casters will be especially helpful.

The scenario fits into almost any fantasy world with a town close to a dark forest. DMs can alter the scenario easily to suit their campaigns.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following:

> Your travels have brought you to Pinecrest, a small town amid several hills. As you walk into town, the inhabitants seem surprised by your arrival; apparently, people with armor and weapons are a rarity here. One by one, the townsfolk greet you, asking about your travels and adventures.

The townsfolk of Pinecrest are quite friendly to the PCs. The taverns and restaurants are pleasant, and the specialty dish at the largest tavern is grilled crawdads. The shops, however, sell only a few small weapons and no armor; adventurers don't come here often, and the blacksmith spends most of his time making horseshoes.

The town seems to be populated by an equal number of humans and elves. They are very excited about the PCs' arrival and ask many questions about them.

After the PCs have settled in, possibly sharing stories of past exploits with the townsfolk, they are approached by a half-elf wearing green and blue priestly robes. He carries an elaborately carved quarterstaff and wears an amulet depicting a crescent moon, which any elven PC recognizes as the symbol of the god Corellon Larethian. He smiles broadly as he approaches the PCs.

"Greetings, travelers," says the half-elf, raising and extending his hand. "My name is Loric, and I am the priest of the church of Corellon. I'm glad to have found hardy adventurers such as yourselves; they never seem to come around here. My church has need of heroes, and maybe you could help. Shall we go inside? You'll find my temple much warmer than the night air or any tavern."

Loric (half-elf priest): AL CG; AC 8; MV 9; C3; hp 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 9, D 16, C 10, I 12, W 16, Ch 16; ML 15; quarterstaff.

Spells: *bless, cure light wounds; chant.*

Loric sports a short white goatee, and his hair is gray and thinning. He is a pacifist, not an adventurer. His staff is mostly for show. He fights only in self-defense.

If the PCs choose to hear Loric's offer, he quickly leads them to the town's church:

Loric's church is a grand one, constructed of stone and fitted with sculptures of devas and other divine beings. The altar inside is made of white marble and surrounded by tapestries depicting the elven gods. For all its beauty, something is definitely amiss. Many of the pews have been broken, and pieces of what was once beautiful stonework litter the floor.

Loric sighs and leads you to the center of the church, which is occupied by an empty pedestal. Whatever it held must have been valuable, for whoever made the pedestal obviously spared no expense. "It was better," Loric says, "before the robbery."

"Last week," he says, "somebody broke in and ransacked the temple. Many of our belongings were damaged or destroyed, but the thief apparently stole our most valuable relic, the Mace of Samoren—a weapon that can destroy undead creatures in a single blow.

"The Mace belonged to the founder of the church, an elf named Samoren, who was quite a hero. It was said he could destroy the mightiest fiends and make dragons tremble. He is long absent from this world, but we still protect his weapon. It has powers to heal the ill and bless the strong. Perhaps some of Samoren's spirit still resides within it.

The Mace of Samoren

Samoren was a 14th-level elven priest when he left the mortal world. His accomplishments include slaying a vampire sorcerer and defeating a marilith tanar'ri. He used many weapons to eradicate evil, among them his mace.

The mace has the powers of a *mace of disruption +4*. It continually sheds orange light that grows brighter in the presence of evil. It is very heavy and requires a 15 Strength to employ as a weapon. Once per day, the weapon can *cure serious wounds, remove curse* (at 12th level), and *cure disease.* Twice per day, it can cast *bless* and *prayer.* Its greatest powers—*heal, raise dead,* and *commune* (with Corellon only, no chance of insanity)—can be used only by a 12th-level (or higher) elven priest of Corellon, and then each of these greater powers can be used only once per month. Only good creatures may use the weapon; evil ones suffer 2d6 hp damage from merely touching it.

Despite the weapon's power, it is not considered an artifact.

XP Value: 10,000 **GP Value:** 20,000

"The problem is that we don't think it was a human or elven thief who stole the mace. We don't know what it was, but it's probably too dangerous for us to face."

Seeing your puzzled faces, the half-elf reaches behind the altar and lifts up a small object. It is a very realistic statue of a cat, perfect in every detail.

"This was found here the morning after the robbery," says Loric. "We had no such statue in the church before, which led us to believe that this used to be a stray, living cat, who fell victim to some evil magical attack. Poor creature. Whatever did this was obviously not human.

"While I can't say for certain, this creature must have come from Periwood forest, to the north. Some say the forest is haunted. People who have gone there and returned have reported sightings of evil spirits, as well as stone animals like this cat. Not only that, there are rumors of merchants who disappeared after traveling too near the accursed place.

"We must retrieve the Mace, but none of the villagers would stand a chance in that forest, let alone against such a powerful creature, but strong heroes like you might. We can offer you 500 pieces of gold for retrieving the weapon. Will you help us?"

Loric gives the PCs until the next day to decide. If the PCs try to haggle with Loric, he can raise his offer to 800 gp, plus he can offer them a magical item upon completion of the task; the church owns a *cloak of elvenkind*, and a pair of *boots of elvenkind.* He cannot afford anything greater.

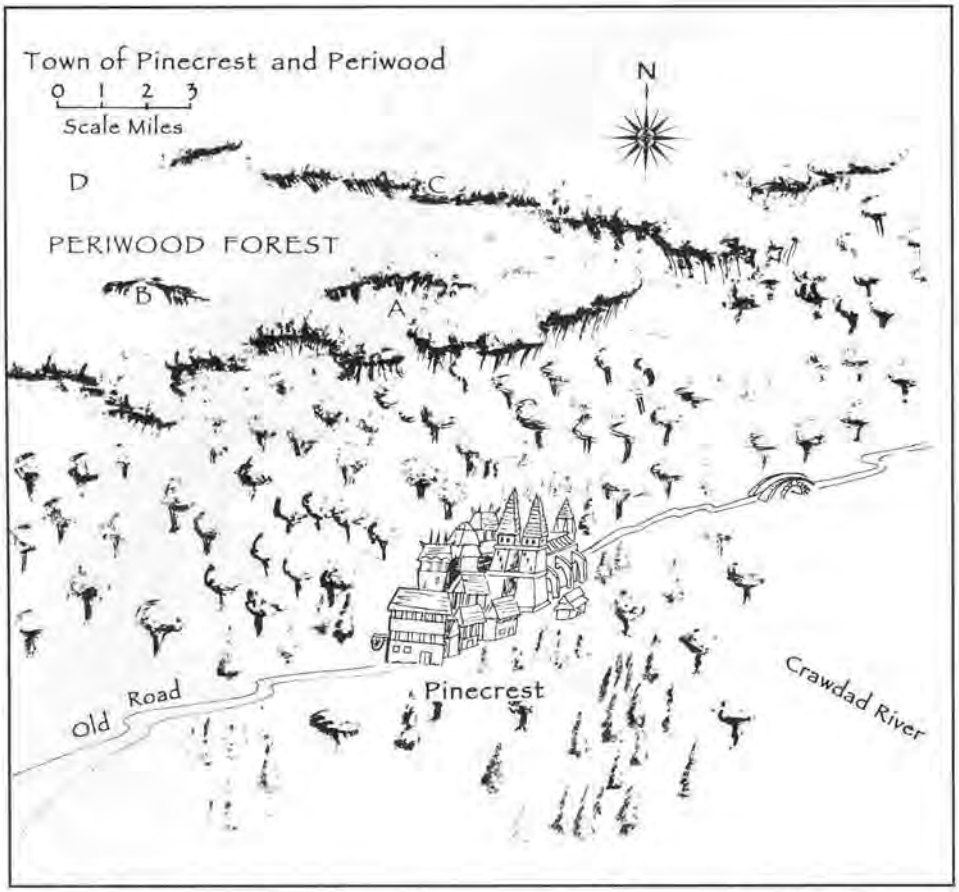
For the Dungeon Master

The PCs may suspect that a medusa is the culprit. If so, they are correct. However, this medusa is certainly not an average one.

Some years ago, Serpena the medusa settled in the Periwood Forest along with her mate, a maedar named Granute, after their former home was invaded by a party of elves (a race she has always hated, as elves were responsible for killing her mother). Granute had traveled far in his time; he spent his childhood in the Underdark and some of his more recent years with an orc tribe.

The couple found a small cavern system under the forest. That, along with the forest's reputation for being haunted, gave them their privacy. Their closeness to the town also gave them the opportunity to kill travelers on their way to and from the village.

One day, a band of six orcs wandered into the forest and had the gall to invade the couple's home. After meeting Serpena and Granute, they survived approximately two minutes. The leader of the group, a shaman, was not petrified (Granute pummeled him to death), and the couple was able to search his belongings. What they found was a set of scrolls and pictographs that detailed the orcish religion. Because of Granute's former association with an orc tribe, both of them understood the language and were able to read it. Serpena soon became engrossed in the scrolls. She loved the stories about the orc god Gruumsh and his pantheon, especially the ancient battles the orcs had fought with elves, and even the vivid descriptions of Acheron, the home plane of the orc gods. She soon realized



the potential the scrolls could bring her.

Finally, Serpena attempted a bold act. She performed the rituals to petition herself to become a priestess of Gruumsh. Surprisingly, she was accepted. Thus, a medusean priestess was born, complete with spellcasting abilities and appropriate powers.

It didn't take long for the new priestess to attract worshippers. After a while, a group of orc and orog bandits, exiles from their tribe, entered the Periwood. This time, rather than slaying them, Serpena welcomed them and told them that they could gain a steady supply of merchants to rob, as well as a greater purpose, by joining up with her.

Impressed by the medusa, the orcs agreed and soon gave their group a fitting name: the Eyes of Death. (While with the orcs, Serpena wears a veil that covers her deadly eyes.) Both parties are pleased with this arrangement, as they have acquired considerable wealth; the orcs keep most of the gold and weapons, while Serpena takes jewelry, magic items and victims for sacrifice.

Over the years, Serpena has performed her role as a priestess well, attaining 7th level as a cleric. Before granting her more power, Gruumsh gave her a quest; to steal the *Mace of Samoren* (see sidebar for details) from the elven church.

She was able to steal the mace under the cover of darkness, and she managed to slip the weapon into a bag without touching it and suffering damage. However, she made a mistake in petrifying a stray cat who wandered into the temple. Whether this mistake leads to her downfall depends on the PCs.

Starting Off

If the PCs decide to accept Loric's offer, he asks them to set out as soon as possible. The PCs should have time to peruse the town's shops for supplies or anything they think they need. Before they leave, Loric approaches them with a small box:

> "Take this with you," urges Loric, handing a small box to you. "You may need it."
>
> The box contains two small vials of pink liquid. "These elixirs," says the half-elf, "will heal your wounds when you drink them. They may help in an emergency. I'm afraid it is all the help I can offer."
>
> As you are about to leave, Loric says, "I wish you luck. May the power of Corellon protect you."

The vials contain *potions of healing*, which were kept in Loric's church for emergencies.

The Periwood

The forest has long been feared as a cursed and haunted place by the citizens of Pinecrest. Rumors of ghouls, ghosts, and vampires inhabiting the forest are common. These rumors are untrue (unless the DM wants them to be true). Serpena, Granute, and the orcs are the greatest dangers the forest has to offer.

The Periwood covers an area of about 30 square miles, only a portion of which is shown on the map. The Crawdad River, named for its abundance of crayfish (called crawdads in these parts), runs through and out of the woods. Crawdads, naturally, are a common delicacy in Pinecrest, but no fisherman ever goes near the forest to get them, preferring to keep a safe distance. Even the orcs of the Eyes of Death gather the tasty shellfish from time to time.

The trip from Pinecrest to the forest is uneventful. When the PCs approach Pinecrest forest, read the following:

> As you ride up to the crest of the last hill, you get your first good look at the forest in front of you. You have certainly seen brighter places. The woods are thick with twisted trees, with branches like gnarled arms reaching out to grab you. Strange sounds constantly come from within... maybe harmless birds and crickets, or perhaps something far more sinister.

There are four places of interest in the forest. If the DM wants to challenge the PCs, he can add more monsters and encounters, perhaps a pack of hungry worgs. The worgs must make a Morale check each time one of them is slain.

Worgs (3–12): INT low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/362 (wolf).

A. Petrified Animals.

> Walking into a clearing, you see a surprising sight. Statues of two deer and several squirrels stand in the center. The squirrels appear to have been enjoying a meal of acorns before they were frozen in stone. The whole scene sends chills down your spines and assures you that Loric was right about what lives here.

These poor animals were petrified a month ago; Serpena came across them while taking her morning constitutional and turned them to stone out of malice.

B. Giant Spider Web.

> The trees in this area are covered with a white ropy substance which stretches from tree to tree. The air stinks of something unnatural.
>
> Looking around, you see a horrid sight. A dead body hangs limply from the strands, with decayed flesh still clinging to the bones. Its dead eyes and open mouth seem to scream a silent warning to you.

The ropy strands and the body are the handiwork of a giant spider lurking in the branches above. The victim was killed weeks ago, is half eaten, and is the cause of the stench. The corpse is not undead, but the DM may make it so if he wishes to scare the PCs.

If the PC don't realize what the webs are, the spider ambushes them from above, imposing a –1 penalty to the party's surprise roll.

The orcs are aware of the monster and keep a safe distance from this area. The spider normally feeds on small game, but it would love to try some PC flesh too. It fights until slain.

Giant Spider: INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3 (web 12); HD 4+4; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA poison; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; *MM*/326.

If the PCs search the body, they find a gold ring (worth 65 gp) still around one of its decayed fingers.

C. Another Victim.

> You approach a bend in the river and spot something curious. Lying under the water and surrounded by teeming crawdads is a human skeleton clutching a sword. Whoever this was has obviously been dead for some time, as there is no trace of flesh left on the bones.

The skeleton is not undead. It is the remains of a thief who once tried to loot Serpena and Granute's lair. He made it here with a bag of coins and several other trinkets but was soon tracked down by Granute. The maedar strangled him to death and threw his body in the river.

The skeleton is not carrying anything of interest; the sword is rusted and worthless. However, if a *speak with dead* spell is used, the thief's spirit can give the PCs the exact location of the medusa's lair. It also knows that Serpena doesn't live alone; he remembers several orcs, a "lot of hairy brutes" (the orogs), a creature that "looks like a small ogre" (Jasper, the ogrillon), and a "big guy with stone skin" (the maedar Granute). He never saw Serpena, however.

D. Lair Entrance.

> As you pass by a group of large boulders, you notice something odd; there seems to be a tunnel made between two of the larger rocks. Looking closer, you see a flickering light down the tunnel. Apparently, this is a cave entrance, and the light shows you it's occupied by someone.

This is exactly what the PCs are looking for—the entrance to Serpena's home. The entrance is just large enough for a human-sized person to fit in, though heavier PCs might have trouble.

Serpena's Lair

The medusa's lair is a small but roomy cavern system. All rooms are lit by torches affixed to the walls, making the air more than a little hazy.

The DM should determine where Serpena, Granute, and the orcs are when the party arrives. Consult the sidebar "Where Are the Villains?" to find their place and activities at the time of day the PCs enter. The orcs are usually in area **4** and would never dare invade Serpena and Granute's private rooms (areas **6–10**); as the scene in area **2** illustrates, they know well what an angry medusa can do!

Serpena (medusean priestess of Gruumsh): INT very; AL LE; AC 4 (5 without shield); MV 9; HD 6 (7th-level priestess); hp 45; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 or by weapon; SA petrification, poison, spells; SD spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP 4,000; *MM*/247 (altered); *spear* +2, dagger, shield, unholy symbol (iron medallion set with a single silver "eye"), keys to the chests in area **7.**

Spells: *darkness, magical stone, protection from good; heat metal, produce flame, spiritual hammer; cause disease, meld into stone; cause serious wounds.*

As a priestess of Gruumsh, Serpena gains +1 to hit vs. elves and can cast *aid* (self only) once per day (see *Monster Mythology,* page 45 for details).

Serpena was born several miles to the north about 30 years ago. When she

Where Are the Villains?

The following lists the locations and activities of the orcs, Serpena, and Granute at various times of the day. Remember that orcs are nocturnal, while Serpena and Granute aren't.

Orcs

7:00 A.M. to Noon: Area **3,** five awake, cooking, making plans; 15 asleep.

Noon–2:00 P.M.: Area **5,** holding rituals with Serpena.

2:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M.: Area **3,** same as 7:00 A.M.

9:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M.: Area **3,** five asleep, 15 awake, preparing to set out to look for victims or returning from such (regardless of exact time).

Granute

7:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.: Area **7,** cooking and then eating breakfast.

9:00 A.M. to Noon: Area **5,** helping Serpena with private ritual.

Noon to 2:00 P.M.: Area **5,** with orcs and Serpena.

2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.: Area **8,** reading.

4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.: Area **7,** cooking and then eating dinner (doesn't eat lunch).

6:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M.: Area **8,** reading and then sleeping.

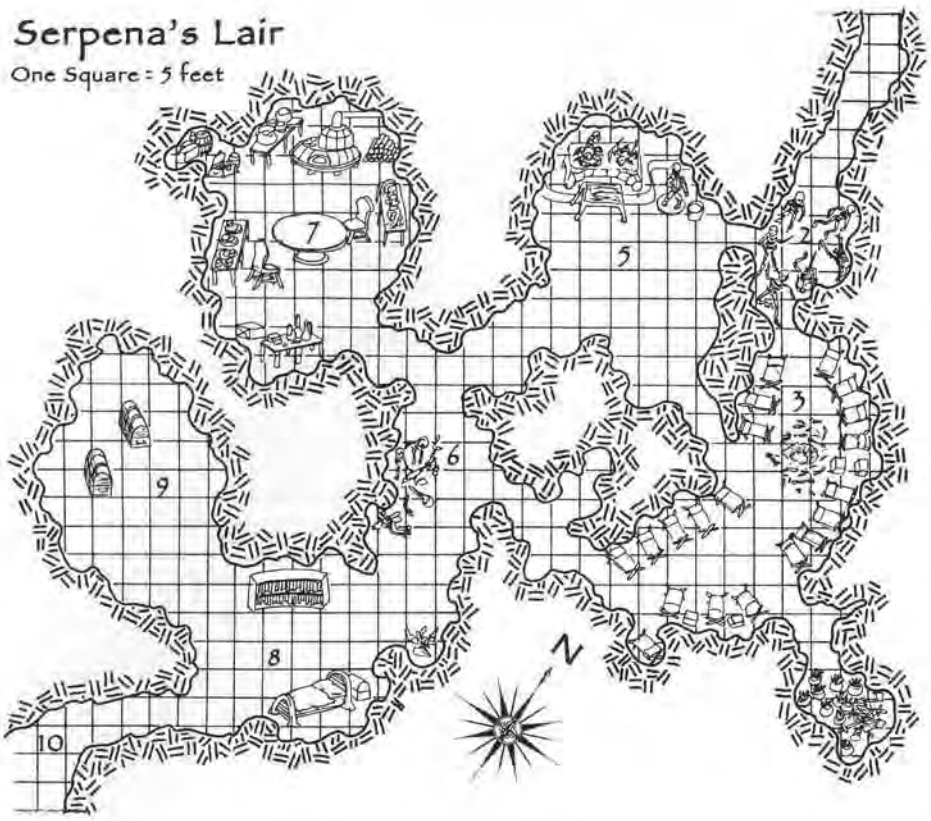
Serpena

8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.: Area **7,** eating breakfast.

9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.: Area **5,** first performing private ritual, then one with the orcs, then practicing fighting or sculpting.

5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.: Area **7,** eating dinner.

6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.: Area **8,** reading or sleeping.



was eight years old, her mother was killed by a group elves, and she has hated elves ever since. She doesn't seem to care that her mother had attacked the elves first and petrified two of them before she was overpowered. The elves didn't feel very comfortable at the thought of killing a helpless child-medusa, so they let her go. Serpena lived in caves and abandoned buildings until able to use her petrifying ability and soon became as much a menace as her mother. Ten years ago, she thought about finding a mate in order to procreate, but after meeting Granute she decided that having a permanent companion would be better than mating with a human and having to kill him.

Although she has an easier way to make statues, Serpena often amuses herself with sculpture and stone carving (she fashioned the altar in area **5** herself), though her works are usually limited to gargoyles and depictions of monsters. (She has an artistic talent proficiency of 14.) She gathers clay from the natural silt in the river and steals most of her tools from victims. She has also tried painting, but she is a dismal failure at it. Her best skill is fighting, which she took up shortly after becoming a priestess, and she is proficient with the spear.

Granute (maedar): INT very; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/2–8; SD *phase through stone, turn stone to flesh,* immune to petrification and paralysis; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975; *MM*/248.

Granute was born in the Underdark to a greater medusa, who for unknown reasons abandoned him soon after birth. He was raised by a community of duergar, who taught him to survive and fight. He left the Underdark at the age of 15 to explore the world and eventually was taken in by an orc tribe. The orcs further augmented his skills as a fighter, as well as nurturing his evil. After three years with the orcs, he set off on his own. He met Serpena just a month later and was immediately smitten. Eventually, they became permanent companions.

Granute is an accomplished chef (though he knows mostly Underdark recipes), and spends much of his time cooking special gastronomical delights such as myconid stew and fried kuo-toa in area **7**. (He even tried to cook a beholder once, but it tasted awful.) Like all maedar, he is fiercely devoted to his mate and will go to any lengths to assist or avenge her.

If the pair discovers the PCs' presence, both of them head for area **8** (if not already there), hoping to ambush the intruders, letting them think they were not detected.

1. Entrance Tunnel. The entrance to the lair looks unremarkable, but it has a primitive burglar alarm. Set on the floor is a tripwire connected to several bells. If the PCs enter without checking for traps, there is a 90% chance for each of them (minus 5% per Dexterity point) to trip the alarm, alerting the orcs in area **3,** who investigate.

2. Guardian Zombies.

> A gruesome scene greets you. Lying on the floor are the corpses of six orcs. As you move into the room, one of the corpses starts to move! The others follow, and within moments the six cadavers lumber toward you.

These zombies are the remains of six disobedient orcs that Serpena killed with her poison and transformed into undead with the use of an *animate dead* spell as a reminder to the rest of them of how powerful she is. The orcs don't spend time here unless it is absolutely necessary; the zombies make them uneasy. The zombies' orders are to kill any non-orcs who enter the chamber (except Serpena and her mate, of course). There is also a 50% chance that a battle in this room alerts the orcs.

Orc zombies (6): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 (×2), 11, 13, 14 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* cold-based attacks, death magic, and poison; SZ M; ML n/a; XP 65 each; *MM*/373.

These monsters are sluggish and always attack last in a combat round. They may be turned normally.

3. Living Quarters. This cavern is home to the members of the Eyes of Death. Unless the orcs were alerted by the tripwire or the zombies, they are unprepared for combat and suffer a –2 penalty to their surprise roll.

Aside from the orcs, the chamber contains a firepit (for cooking food), 20 crude cots, several piles of mutton and livestock bones, and some of the orcs'

possessions (tinderboxes, blankets, paste jewelry, etc.).

The orcs attempt to overwhelm the PCs with their superior numbers. If spellcasters' appearances are obvious, the orcs are smart enough to target them first, hoping to ruin spellcasting. Like all orcs, they despise elves and dwarves.

If their leader and more than half their number are slain, the survivors must make a morale check; failure means they retreat deeper into the lair, hoping to find Serpena for aid.

A battle here alerts Serpena and Granute, but they do not come to this location, preferring to wait to ambush the party in area **8,** with the help of any of the orcs who reach her.

The Eyes of Death consists of 15 orcs, six orogs, and an ogrillon named Jasper.

Orcs (15): INT average; AL LE; AC 6 (10 unarmored); MV 9; HD 1; hp 8 (×8), 7 (×5), 6 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SD 120' infravision; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each; *MM*/281; leather armor, shield. Ten of the orcs use long swords; the others wield spears.

Orogs (6): INT high; AL LE; AC 4; MV 6; HD 3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65; *MM*/281 (orc); chain mail, shield, morning star.

Jasper (ogrillon): INT average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–7/2–7; SZ M; ML 14; XP 175; *MM*/274 (ogre, half).

4. Orc Treasure Storage. This small area is where the orcs store their share of the treasure they take from victims. The floor is covered with small sacks containing gold, silver, and copper coins, a total of 764 gp worth. The room also contains five short swords, 10 spears, and eight battle axes.

5. The Black Altar.

> This room is more brightly lit than the others. Before you is a large altar chiseled out of black marble. Carved into the altar are strange designs and large eyes that seem to stare right through you. On the altar are lit candles giving off an odd scent. In front of it rests a stone table, stained red from blood. On the table are two small clay sculptures, one resembling a bat-like humanoid creature and the other a skeletal-like figure with a scorpion tail. Behind the altar is a large tapestry, depicting an orc with one eye fighting a group of elves on a bloody battlefield under a dark sky.

This is where Serpena and the orcs hold their unholy rituals. The tapestry was stolen by the orcs from their former tribe. The sculptures, made by Serpena, depict two baatezu—a pit fiend and an osyluth, respectively. (They don't look much like actual baatezu, as anyone who's seen one will attest, but Serpena had only descriptions to work by.)

Several items here are valuable: the tapestry (which depicts Gruumsh) is worth 800 gp to an interested buyer. The sculptures are worth 50 gp each (more to an expert on planar travel or an art collector). There is also a silver sacrificial knife (120 gp), three chunks of incense (20 gp each), two carved ivory statuettes (100 gp each), and the orcish scrolls that started Serpena on the road to priesthood (30 gp). There are also several sculpting tools and a bucket of clay, next to which is an incomplete sculpture.

6. Stone Storage.

> This room appears empty, save for a pile of stones. As you look closely, you notice that the stones are oddly shaped. You see that they are shaped like body parts of both humanoids and animals—legs, arms, even heads.

Unlike most medusae, Serpena has no full statues created from past victims. Due to Granute's presence, she can feed on them. Granute smashes her petrified victims, then uses his powers to turn the pieces into raw flesh, which the pair eats (sometimes cooking the meat first).

This room is simply where leftover pieces are stored, at least until Serpena has a craving for flesh.

7. Kitchen.

> A marvelous aroma permeates this room. A large pot-bellied iron oven occupies the corner, a table with two chairs stands in the center, and shelves of pots, pans, utensils, and foodstuffs line the walls. You note the cause of the wonderful smell—a fresh cherry pie cooling on the shelf; it must have been baked in the past hour.

Serpena and Granute enjoy many other foods besides the flesh of victims. Other than the pie, the foodstuffs here include: seven baskets of assorted vegetables, a crate of apples, two jars of sweet honey, three jars of dried fruit, two honeydew melons, several spices, two bags of flour, a bag of mixed nuts, a basket of crawdads, a bag of blueberry muffins (Serpena's favorite dessert), several bags of mushrooms, two bottles of cheap wine, two bottles of good wine (worth 15 gp each), two bottles of very strong drow wine (worth 30 gp each, drinker must save vs. poison or suffer effects of a *confusion* spell), several bottles of water (for both cooking and drinking), and a tun of dwarven ale. Most of this food was stolen from merchants and travelers, except the wine, which was purchased from drow traders.

Other items here include a pile of firewood, several plates and glasses, many potpourri spices, various wall hangings, many forks, spoons, knives, and a centerpiece made of three stone squirrels (petrified). Most of the pots and utensils are of no real value and are too bulky to be transported. One pot, however, is an *everbountiful soup kettle,* stolen from a wizard. This item is different from usual magic kettles; it produces chicken soup instead of vegetable stew. Over the stove is a small ventilation shaft which leads to the surface. It is far too small for anyone to fit through, though.

8. Bedchamber.

> This is apparently a bedroom. Next to the south wall is a comfortable bed made of wood and blanketed with bearskins. A large wooden chest lies next to it, and a large shelf full of books stands next to the north wall.

The bed was built by two of the orcs who fancied themselves carpenters, and the skins were taken from bears that Jasper killed. The three skins are worth 10 gp each.

The chest, which is not locked, contains Serpena's clothing and some of her jewelry. Most of it is fake, but there is one pair of gold earrings worth 50 gp.

There are several varieties of books on the shelf, some written in Common, others in Orcish. None are particularly valuable, except a small traveling spellbook on the top (taken from a low-level wizard). It contains the spells *alarm,*

audible glamer, chill touch, enlarge, shocking grasp, Tenser's floating disc, and *wall of fog.* Serpena has no current use for the book, but she realizes its value.

9. Serpena's Treasure Room. This room is where Serpena stores her more valuable treasures. In the center of the room are two chests. Both are locked, and only Serpena has the key. A thief may attempt to open the lock normally.

The chests are also trapped. If opened in a way other than with the proper key, a stream of acid sprays out, causing 1–10 hp damage unless a saving throw vs. wands is made. Thieves have normal chances to find and remove the traps.

The orcs have no idea that the chests are trapped. As noted, they don't come here often, and Serpena placed the traps with them in mind. (As the saying goes, there is no honor among thieves.)

Chest #1 contains three bags of coins (a total of 546 gp), a decorated short sword (200 gp), a topaz pendant (500 gp), two gold bracelets (60 gp each), a spyglass (500 gp), and a ceremonial dagger studded with opals (300 gp).

Chest #2 contains two potions (*growth* and *plant control*), a *scroll of protection from undead* (wraiths), an *alchemy jug,* and the object of the PCs' quest—the *Mace of Samoren.*

10. Escape Tunnel. This tunnel leads to an area of the Underdark (exactly where is up to the DM). Serpena has kept it open in case of a dire emergency.

Facing Serpena

Eventually, the PCs are going to come face-to-face with the medusa and her spouse. Serpena and Granute are intelligent and cunning adversaries, and they fight as such.

If the PCs have been detected, Serpena tries to ambush them by hiding behind the bed in area 8 (imposing a –1 penalty to the PCs' surprise rolls). Otherwise, she fights wherever the PCs find her.

Serpena sends any surviving members of the Eyes of Death to soften up the PCs. They fight to the death, knowing that a similar fate awaits them if they make their mistress angry. Once the orcs are defeated, Serpena attacks the PCs herself. When she strikes, she first tries to use her deadly gaze to turn them to stone. If anyone survives this attack, she lets loose her volley of offensive spells. After her spells are exhausted, she attacks with her spear. Remember, PCs averting their eyes suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls. Serpena does not want to displease her god by fleeing a battle, so she fights to the death (it's the downside of worshiping a war god).

Granute remains hidden in the shadows until Serpena is injured. When this happens, he attacks spellcasters first (knowing the threat they pose). If Serpena is killed, he retreats down the escape tunnel (area **10**). If followed, he uses his phasing power to move through the stone. If afforded no avenue of escape (a rare occurrence, considering that both the walls and floors are stone), the maedar surrenders, so long as the PCs spare him. However, he attempts to escape at the first opportunity.

Wise PCs might have a mirror with them, but Serpena and Granute are prepared for this. At the first sight of a mirror, Granute leaps out and attacks the person wielding it in an effort to destroy it. Treat all mirrors as AC 10, modified by the mirror holder's Dexterity.

Even if Serpena is petrified by her reflection, Granute can easily restore her to life with his *stone to flesh* power. (Serpena has a Constitution of 15 in regards to system shock rolls.)

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs return victorious with the *Mace,* Loric's church hails them as heroes. Loric gives them the promised reward and also allows the PCs to choose either a pair of *boots of elvenkind* or a *cloak of elvenkind.* Both of these items were mundane belongings of Samoren (mundane to him). Loric tells the PCs that they are welcome in his church any time in the future.

PCs may be tempted to keep the powerful *Mace of Samoren,* but this is highly unadvisable. The PCs would become outlaws, and Loric may find other parties or bounty hunters (of good alignment) to track them down and recover the weapon.

If Serpena is killed but Granute escapes, he is forevermore the sworn enemy of the party. The widowed maedar might find friends in the Underdark who could help him take revenge, such as his former duergar allies. The PCs definitely have not seen the last of him.

Finally, there may be other mysteries to be explored in the dark forest of Periwood. Perhaps the forest truly is haunted by ghasts, wights, or even nastier undead. The possibilities are limited only by the DM's imagination. Ω

Want to share your latest adventure?

Ask for a copy of our writer's guidelines:
DUNGEON Module Guidelines
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055
Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) with your request. Guidelines are also available on the TSR website:

www.tsrinc.com

Tying Up Loose Ends

With the Silver River returned to normal, the ecosystem around the waterway eventually rights itself. With a steady diet of normal water, the giant animals return to their normal size within days.

As the PCs journey southward back to the road, and ultimately their original destination, they should not be harassed by any of the remaining giant denizens of the woods. Just as they are about to leave the southern forest, Karynne stops the PCs to thank them. If at all possible, this encounter should occur in the clearing at area **1.**

> You step back into the clearing and are confronted with the most astonishing sight! The ant hill is in ruins, and the ants are racing about in a chaotic frenzy. Standing over the decimated dirt pile is an enormous furry mole. Its massive head is buried in the anthill, and it is squealing in delight as it munches on the hapless insects. The rodent laps up the red monsters with its sticky tongue and digs deeper into the recesses of the hive.
>
> Suddenly you are startled by a voice calling to you from above. "Thank you, noble heroes," says a female voice. "Thank you for restoring my forest."
>
> You finally see her, lying on one of the highest branches of the battle-scarred oak. It is the woman you rescued so many hours earlier. She is beautiful, with long, slender limbs and dark tanned skin. Her features are soft and delicate, and her hair is the deep green color of the undergrowth. "You have done a great service, both to me and to nature herself. You have made an eternal friend in me. From this day forward, you shall always be safe in Karynne's wood."
>
> She touches her fingers to her lips and blows you a kiss. She smiles mischievously, winks at you once, and then disappears. Once again, you are alone in this bizarre forest, except for the giant mole gorging itself behind you.

Karynne has found a unique way of removing the red ant threat. If undisturbed, the mole wipes out the anthill in a matter of hours.

This is the limit of the PCs' interaction with Karynne, and they find nothing if they search for her. She remains an enigma to the PCs, and they may never know another thing about her. If the players ever return to camp in Karynne's Forest, the dryad watches over them personally to ensure their safety.

Karynne (dryad): INT high; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 (knife); SA *charm*; SD *dimension door*; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 12; XP 975 (for rescue only); *MM*/93.

If it is appropriate with the DM's campaign, the PCs may return to the forest in the future to ask Karynne for help or information about some forest adventure. In that case, feel free to develop Karynne as an NPC who interacts regularly with the PCs. After all, they saved not only her life but also the vessel for her eternal soul.

If the PCs successfully removed the shards of the jar from the source of the Silver River, restoring the natural order to the forest, they are entitled to a reward of 500 XP each, in addition to any experience earned for defeating the monsters. In many cases, defeating does not necessarily require killing. The party can earn full XP value for monsters that are tricked or bypassed without combat.

On their way back to the road, the PCs could run into all kinds of complicating detours. For example, on the way back through the foothills, the PCs may run into a clever ambush set by a stranded grell named Pakkililirr (*DUNGEON® Adventures* issue #52). The grell has recently set up camp in the area and is hunting for fresh meat.

If the PCs decide to take a shortcut through the Mountains of the Golems, they find that the name is more appropriate than they at first thought. There are rumors that many years ago an evil priest used the mountains as a hideaway to manufacture a clay golem. Some folk whisper that the creature went insane and killed its creator, and now wanders the hills.

Perhaps even before the adventure gets started, the PCs could be held up at the bridge over the Silver River by an extortionist gnome named Ultio with a knack for illusions ("Troll Bridge," *DUNGEON Adventures* issue #36). If the PCs return to the road to pursue their original destination, they could be sidetracked by a group of down-on-their-luck dwarves who have recently taken up robbery as a way of life. They are the last of the Iron House (*DUNGEON Adventures* issue #39), a noble family so desperate to restore their status they are conspiring with a conniving sahuagin priestess.

And then there is always the matter of the stampeding buffalo who have somehow retained their enlarged state. They can't simply be left alone; their relentless grazing will decimate all the farmlands in the area. The Regent of the nearby city of Levlar might hire the PCs to take the overgrown beasts as a gift to a neighboring tribe of stone giants. (It would be less of an act of goodwill as it would be a convenient method of disposing of them.) How the party could ever accomplish such a monumental undertaking would truly be an adventure worth telling! Ω

Special Thanks To This Issue's Playtesters!

Jeff Crook
Matt Shelton
Ernest Mueller
Ernie Etherton
John Gately
Brian Maxwell
Stephen Rishop
Larry Ward

ORANGE AND BLACK

BY PETER C. SPAHN

Tyger, tyger . . .

Artwork by Rags Morales
Cartography by Diesel

Peter writes: "I am 26 years old and have been playing AD&D for over 15 years now. Writing this bio, I have come to realize just how little I have accomplished in my life up until now. Thank you very much, DUNGEON® Adventures."

"Orange and Black" is an AD&D® adventure for a group of 3–6 characters of levels 1–3 (about 12 total levels). This is primarily a wilderness adventure, so characters with outdoor skills would be better suited than urban PCs or spelunkers. At least one priest of any religion is essential to the completion of the adventure.

Beginning the Adventure

The PCs enter the village of Launise just as night starts to fall. Lodging is available at the local tavern. When the PCs enter the tavern, they see a group of villagers gathered together, apparently having an impromptu meeting. PCs who ask questions or listen in on the villagers' conversation quickly learn what's going on.

A group of small children left early this morning to play in the forest. They all knew to stay close to the town, and one of the older boys was even sent to keep an eye on them. About midday, after a game of hide-and-seek, the boy took a head count and realized one of the children (Arton) was missing. They searched all day, calling out his name, but he was nowhere to be found. Right now, the villagers are organizing a search party to go out in the morning.

Rooms in the tavern cost 5 sp per night, meal included. The common room is packed with people, and the place is abuzz with talk of the missing child. The community is deeply concerned with the thought of Arton being lost near the Black River.

For the DM

Launise is a small frontier farming village of about 100 people, located roughly 20 miles from the nearest town. The village has a single tavern, smithy, and general store. Most of the villagers are farmers who moved here with the hopes of building better lives for themselves and their families. Despite the dangers of living so close to the Black Forest, the people have prospered. The soil is rich, and the area is rich with untapped resources.

As the PCs settle in, the bartender approaches them. He introduces himself as Jocko Sanders, the proprietor, and asks if he might have a word with them. He looks understandably distraught. Arton, the missing boy, is an orphan Jocko took under his wing a few years ago. When Jocko decided to move to Launise, he brought Arton with him. The boy usually does odd jobs around the tavern, and Jocko loves the lad like a son. Jocko tells the PCs that Arton is 8 years old—too young to survive alone in the woods for long.

Jocko and a few villagers are going out in the morning to search the forest, but none of them are skilled huntsmen, and he is afraid the group might destroy any signs of the boy's trail. He asks knowledgeable PCs for their advice. If any of them claim to be trackers or appear interested in helping, Jocko attempts to hire them to find the boy in place of the search party.

Jocko is not rich, but he can afford to pay the PCs 20 gp each (up to 100 gp total) or 100 gp each in credit at his tavern or any of the other shops in Launise. If asked, the older lad who was picked to chaperone the children—a 12 year-old boy named Taurus—can guide the PCs to the spot where the children were playing the day before. Under no circumstances will he cross the Black River.

If the PCs decide to undertake the search, they can leave when they are ready. Although Jocko is worried about Arton being out in the forest overnight, he also understands how difficult it would be to pick up the boy's trail and is willing to wait until morning. PCs are given free room and board for the night. If the PCs insist on leaving that night, DMs should amend the adventure accordingly.

Note: PCs can buy any normal equipment that sells for 4 gp or less in the *PHB*. The owner of the general store, Thomas Grady, also buys skins or furs of trapped animals at 60–90% of their normal value depending on the condition of the pelts. Armor and weapons, other than daggers, short bows and arrows, cannot be purchased at the general store. The smith, Myles Goodfellow, can make weapons (but not armor) in the normal amount of time at double the standard price. PCs might also borrow equipment from townsfolk who have family armor and weapons to loan, at prices determined by the DM.

Searching the Forest

If the PCs leave in the morning and go to where the children were playing, it is difficult to pick up Arton's trail as the children have trampled the ground while searching for him. Characters with the tracking proficiency must make a proficiency check with a –3 penalty to the roll. If the attempt is made during the night, the penalty increases to –7.

Characters who can speak with animals find a squirrel that lives in the area. The squirrel remembers the children because some of them tired to hit him with a rock. He also remembers that one of them went deeper into the woods than the others and can show the PCs exactly where he saw the boy last. (This allows PCs with the tracking proficiency to pick up the boy's trail with a +1 modifier to the roll.)

If a tracking roll fails, PCs may continue searching the vicinity for Arton's trail. Every half hour spent searching entitles a PC with the tracking proficiency to make a new roll with a cumulative +1 modifier.

Once the PCs find Arton's trail, it is relatively easy for them to follow it. It is obvious that the boy was lost, as the trail winds and twists through the woods, sometimes doubling back on itself.

The Clearing

After following the trail for several hours, the PCs are led to a clearing near the banks of the Black River. PCs without the tracking proficiency or those who failed their proficiency checks will end up here eventually, lured to the clearing by the sight of buzzards circling overhead.

The ground in the clearing is visibly churned, and there is dried blood spattered in the dirt. Signs of a struggle are evident, and it is easy to fear the worst as Arton's tracks do not lead away from the area.

If the clearing is examined, PCs will find tufts of black fur snagged in the thorns of a bramble bush. PCs making a successful tracking check find two extra sets of tracks. One belongs to a wild boar, and the other is a set of huge clawed footprints resembling a mountain lion's, but about twice the size of any mountain lion in the area. The boar's tracks end here, while the "lion's" tracks lead southeast.

The bark of a nearby tree has been raked with claws. Characters investigating this spot the carcass of a boar wedged securely in the branches of the tree above. It is the boar's carcass that attracted the buzzards.

If the PCs follow the "lion" tracks, they eventually come across Arton sleeping on the sandy beach of a stream flowing away from the Black River. Lying next to the boy is the bloody haunch of a slain deer. The boy's overalls are spattered with blood, but he otherwise seems fine. When first awakened, the boy is terrified. Once the PCs explain that they were hired by Jocko, the boy hugs them and thanks them for saving his life.

If asked how he got here, Arton shivers and says that a huge orange beast with blood dripping from its fangs brought him here so he could be eaten later. (Arton says he was too afraid to run, fearing the creature would come charging after him.)

What Arton actually saw was Gristy—a human warrior *polymorphed* into a tiger.

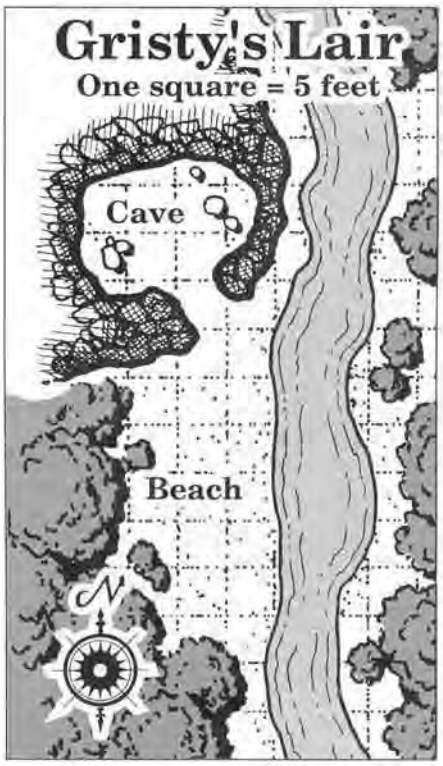
Arton (human boy): AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; 0-level; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 5; unarmed.

Gristy

Tiger: INT low (5); AL N; AC 6; MV 12, Sw 6, Cl 6; HD 5+5; hp 41; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10; SA rear claws for 2d4 hp damage; leap; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L (8' long); ML 10; XP 650; *MM*/36 (cat, great).

Gristy was a human adventurer. Three years ago, one of Gristy's close friends was transformed into a huge snake by an evil wizard named Krazen the Shaper. Gristy tracked down the mage and tried to rescue his friend but was himself captured and transformed into a tiger. The wizard contemplated keeping Gristy around as a guardian and for his own amusement. In the end, Gristy freed himself, taking the mage's right arm with him.

In the beginning, Gristy's mind was unaffected by the change. As time wore on, he gradually lost more of his former identity and now remembers very little of his past life. He is a huge specimen weighing several hundred pounds. He has lived in the Black River area for nearly 20 years, preying mainly on deer and other game living in the forest. He is careful not to attack humans or



demihumans, as part of him remembers how dangerous they are if aroused.

Concealed high up in the branches of a tree, Gristy watches over the young boy sleeping on the beach. If he is seen or attacked, Gristy retreats through the thick foliage into the forest, circling back to his lair after he thinks he has lost his pursuers. If, for some reason, the PCs harm the boy, Gristy attacks them.

Orange and black tigers are not indigenous to this area, and this may indicate to perceptive PCs that something is amiss. Hunters, rangers, and druids should realize this with a successful Intelligence check.

The Truth of the Matter

The children were playing their games just north of town. During the game of hide-and-seek, Arton went too far into the woods and got lost. He wandered around aimlessly for some time trying to find his way back to the other children. Finally, he ended up in a clearing on the banks of the Black River. It was beginning to get dark, and once he realized he would not make it home before nightfall, he was so terrified he sat down and began to cry.

Unknown to Arton, Gristy was lounging in a tree just a few feet above. The part of him that was still human recognized the wail of a child in need. His tiger side associated this need with hunger, and he was about to find the chid some food when he caught the scent of a wild boar. The boar had been drawn to the area by the child's crying.

Silently, Gristy leapt upon the boar, breaking its spine with one snap of his mighty jaws. Arton heard a pid squeal, followed by a great crashing in the brush. Then a huge, fanged orange thing—a bloody boar gripped in its maw—emerged from the brush. With a cry, Arton fainted.

Surprised, Gristy sniffed the boy to see if he was still alive. After storing the boar's carcass in a tree for later, Gristy gently lifted the boy in his jaws and brought him to his lair. Once there, he laid him on the beach, leaving the bloody haunch of a deer for him to eat when he awoke.

Arton awakened not long after. At the sight of the deer, he was too frightened to move. He assumed he'd been placed with the rest of the monster's food to be devoured later. He figured the monster was probably close by and would kill him if he tried to escape. Arto stayed awake all night, but fear and exhaustion finally took its toll on the youngster, and he fell asleep a few hours before dawn.

Dealing With Gristy

Communicating with Gristy is difficult but not impossible. A ranger's calming ability has no effect, but if approached by a ranger or someone speaking softly or soothingly, Gristy perks his ears and listens. Although he does not understand what is being said, he understands that he is being spoken to. In no case does he allow anyone close enough to touch him, emitting a low growl and raising his hackles at those who come within 5 feet.

If a speak with animals spell is cast, remember that Gristy thinks and acts like a tiger except for rare circumstances. If the PCs ask questions about his prior life, he snarls, snaps at the PCs and shouts, "No! Why do you torment me?!?" He then turns and bounds off into the woods, refusing to associate with the party again.

Spells such as *animal friendship* and *charm person or mammal* function normally, but if he is made to act against his nature (go into a town, hurt a child, etc.), he receives an additional saving throw to resist the spell.

If the party approaches Gristy's lair (see below) while the tiger is within, Gristy issues a low warning growl. PCs who enter the cave are attacked normally. If the PCs retreat, Gristy chases them out of the clearing and snarls a warning before heading back to the cave. He does not attack retreating characters but may follow them until he is certain they are not coming back.

PCs reduced to 0 hp inside Gristy's lair are deposited on the beach. Anyone coming to the beach to retrieve a fallen comrade is not attacked, although Gristy watches closely from the depths of his cave.

If the PCs wait until Gristy leaves before they enter the cave, there is a cumulative 20% chance per hour that the tiger returns. In this case, he automatically realizes someone is in his lair. He climbs atop the nearest hill, conceals himself, and waits for the intruders to exit the cave. He is curious but does not fight unless attacked. If provoked, he retaliates by fighting with his claws retracted (one-quarter damage) for one round. He then leaps out of the fray, turns back toward the party, and roars. PCs with the animal handling proficiency who make a successful roll at +1 realize this is not the way a wild animal normally behaves in this situation. If the PCs break off the battle, Gristy does not pursue them. If they press the attack, Gristy fights to the best of his ability, inflicting normal damage with his claws.

If Gristy loses more than half his total hit points, he attempts to flee. If prevented from retreating, he bites the closest character and leaps into a tree with the PC still in his mouth. He then wedges the character firmly between a fork in the tree before withdrawing into the forest. Any PC pinned in this manner must make a successful Strength check to dislodge himself.

If Gristy is slain, he does not revert back to his human form.

Returning Arton

Once the PCs find Arton, they should have no trouble returning him to the village. The villagers are relieved to see Arton home safe, and the PCs are regarded as local heroes.

If the characters neither saw nor

confronted Gristy, the villagers would be happy to pay them for ridding the area of the huge orange beast that apparently attacked the boy.

Gristy's Lair

Gristy's lair is a cave in a small hill near the beach. The inside is littered with stones and has a strong animal smell. Behind one of the larger stones is an ancient suit of chain mail, a broad sword, a *hand axe +1,* and two daggers in rotted leather scabbards. All except the axe are rusted beyond use.

In one corner of the cave is a rotten leather backpack and the skeleton of a 20' long boa constrictor. The skeleton is all that remains of Gristy's friend who, thanks to Krazen's twisted magic, did not revert back to his original form when he died.

Inside the pack, wrapped in oilcloth, is an ancient journal telling the tale of Gristy's adventuring career. Toward the end is a passage about how his comrade (named Endril) was turned into a snake and held prisoner by the evil mage Krazen. After months of searching, Gristy located the hidden temple of the goddess Oshalla, Bane of Magic. The priests agreed to reverse his friend's enchantment using the healing waters of the shrine. The final entry states that Gristy was preparing to make the journey to Krazen's lair to rescue his friend and bring him back to the shrine. The book itself is well-made, but half unused.

The journal bears Gristy's family seal on the cover. Residents of Launise, as well as any PC making a successful heraldry or local history proficiency check, recognize the insignia as that of a wealthy merchant family living in a city to the north. If the PCs return the book to Gristy's family, they attempt to hire the PCs to find the hidden shrine of Oshalla which, according to the book, lies somewhere along the Black River. Only by visiting the shrine can the PCs undo Gristy's curse.

The Shrine of Oshalla

In ancient times, Oshalla was a goddess with considerable power and influence. Her priests were known for their ability to hunt down and bring even the most powerful wizards and magic-wielding creatures to justice. However, as general interest in magic increased, her power and influence began to wane.

Rulers and kings found it easier to put their faith in court magicians and spell-using advisors, while Oshalla's temples and priests were no longer welcome in the larger cities. Over time, only a scattering of priests and shrines remained.

Years ago, Gristy found one of Oshalla's shrines. The priests agreed to help Gristy restore his comrade's true form by bathing him in the dispelling waters of the Pool of the Goddess. After Gristy was captured, the evil Krazen discovered the location of the shrine and attempted to destroy it. However, the shrine had powerful wards protecting it against his magic. Furious at being thwarted, Krazen called up a great storm that swelled the Black River, flooding the entire compound and killing almost everyone within.

Locating the shrine should not be too difficult. There is a well-worn path leading from Gristy's lair to the shrine. After escaping from Krazen's lair, Gristy returned to the shrine and attempted to enter, but he was driven away by magical wards and natural obstacles. Even in his present form, Gristy knows his salvation lies within the shrine, and he comes here often looking for a way inside.

The hills surrounding the shrine are actually steep cliffs about 20-30 feet in height. In some places, pieces of the compound's 20' high walls remain intact. The cliffs and walls can be scaled or climbed normally with the proper training and equipment.

Inside, the ground is littered with rubble, ruined buildings, and fallen trees washed up by the flood. If the PCs search the rubble thoroughly, they occasionally turn up skeletal human remains. These remains are all that remains of the priests slain in the Black River flood.

Druids and rangers making a successful Intelligence check or PCs making a successful weather sense check can tell the place has flooded several times over the past few years.

Special Enchantments

Wizards and priests have cause to be concerned upon entering the compound, for the Shrine of Oshalla contains debilitating wards directed solely at magic-wielding beings save priests of Oshalla.

The shrine's protective magics affect the entire compound and radiate upward to a height of 50' above the compound. Luckily, the magic has waned over the years. Normally, the wards prevented most magic from functioning within this area of effect. Now, any magic-user who casts a spell must save vs. wand; if the roll fails, the spell is wasted and lost from memory. Priests who worship deities other than Oshalla must also make a saving throw, with similar results if the roll fails. In either case, if the saving throw succeeds, the spell is cast successfully.

The above ward also applies to spells cast prior to entering the area of effect. Spells such as *armor, invisibility, fly* and *Tenser's floating disc* have a base 60% chance of being dispelled, modified by –5% per level of the spell. (For example, *invisibility* is a second-level spell, so the chance of it being dispelled upon contact with the area of effect is 50%.) PCs who fly 50' above the shrine may suddenly find themselves plummeting to the ground and sustaining damage, assuming their ready-to-use *feather fall* spell fails also.

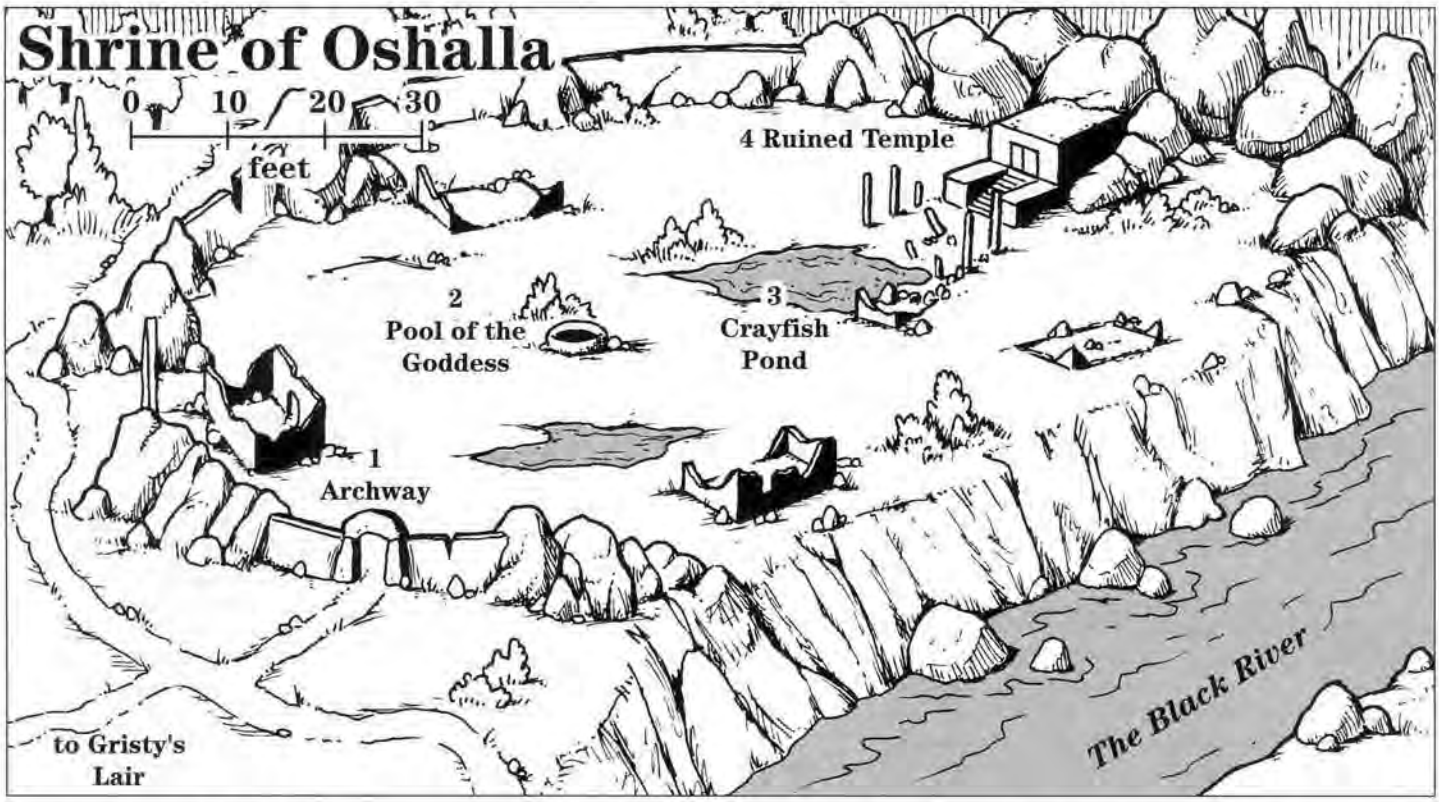
Magic items are rendered inert in the compound and surrounding area of effect, but magical weapons and armor function normally. (Weapons with spell-like abilities cannot use those abilities while the negating ward is functioning.)

These magical wards were originally cast upon the archway to the shrine (area **1**). The arch can be deactivated temporarily. If the arch is destroyed, these wards vanish forever.

1. The Arch of Oshalla. This archway is 10' wide and made of weathered gray marble. The arch radiates magic, is impervious to non-magical attacks and weapons, and withstands 200 hp of magical damage (including magical blunt weapon damage) before crumbling. If the archway is destroyed, the magic-negating aura around the entire shrine is permanently lifted.

Wizards, enchanted creatures (Gristy included), and magic-wielding beings who approach the arch feel extremely uneasy and sustain 2d4 hp damage upon stepping through the arch. This magical barrier is what keeps Gristy away, and it is also dispelled upon the archway's destruction.

The archway may be temporarily deactivated by touching it with a holy symbol of Oshalla. Doing this renders the archway inert for one round; during



this time, all wards detailed in the preceding section (see "Special Enchantments") are also removed. PCs can find a proper holy symbol in the ruined temple (area 4) and use it to get Gristy and their magic-wielding companions through the archway safely.

2. Pool of the Goddess. This pool was the worship area for the priests of Oshalla. Here they cured people of the effects of evil magic.

The pool is actually a 5' diameter, 3' deep bowl filled with algae and green, stagnant water. At one time, marble benches and green grass lawns surrounded the pool, but these were washed away or destroyed by the flood.

To be used, the pool must be cleaned out and refilled with fresh water. A *bless* spell must then be cast on the water within. When this is done, the pool has the ability to *heal* (as the sixth-level priest's spell) all creatures placed within it. Moreover, the pool automatically dispels all magical effects (permanent or otherwise) cast on that creature. Magical items are not affected by the pool, nor are creatures with innate magical abilities.

3. Crayfish Pond. This shallow (3'–7' deep) pond is full or fresh, clear water. It is also the home of a giant crayfish that washed into it during the last flood. The crayfish hides itself under a thin layer of silt at the bottom of the pond and is 90% invisible to those on shore. It imposes a –3 surprise penalty when attacking.

The crayfish attacks anyone who attempts to get water from this pond, scuttling out to snap at anyone within reach. It retreats when reduced to half hit points.

Giant crayfish: INT non-; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 4+4; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/2d6; SA surprise; SZ L (8' long); ML 13; XP 175; *MM*/175 (crustacean, giant).

4. Ruined Temple. PCs approaching the temple hear a loud buzzing sound. A large wasp nest hangs to one side of the temple doors. If the PCs approach within five feet, the wasps become extremely agitated.

The temple doors are made of iron-bound oak and are wedged shut. It takes a combined strength of 34 to force open the doors. The doors can be hacked open with axes in just a few rounds, but any attempt to open the doors disturbs the nest and causes the swarm of wasps to attack.

The swarm fills a 10' cube and centers itself on one unlucky individual (chosen randomly). Anyone stung by the swarm suffers 1d4+1 hp damage/round. The swarm moves with the individual. Although weapons have no effect on the swarm, fire and area-effect spells either damage the swarm or force it to disperse. A torch inflicts 1d4 hp damage to the swarm per round; a *burning hands* spell inflicts regular spell damage. *Gust of wind* and *stinking cloud* spells cause the swarm to disperse immediately.

Wasp swarm: INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV Fl 15 (C); HD 1 hp/20 insects; hp 16; THAC0 special (see above); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SZ M; ML 6; XP 120; *MM*/206 (insect swarm—variant).

Inside the Temple

Beyond the temple doors lies a ruined antechamber roughly 30' square. Much of the room is filled with debris from collapsed pillars and stonework. Set into the back of the chamber is a raised alcove containing a plain stone altar. The walls enclosing the altar are adorned with tiled mosaics, many of the tiles cracked or missing.

The mosaic to the left of the altar depicts a priest wearing a glowing medallion (a holy symbol of Oshalla) and a leper standing before the archway (see area **1**). The priest's arms are upraised as if he's preparing to cast a spell on the leper.

The mosaic behind the altar is partially obscured by cobwebs and shows the leper kneeling before the Pool of the Goddess (area **2**) while the priest wearing the medallion casts a spell upon the waters.

The mosaic to the right of the altar shows the leper bathing in the Pool of the Goddess while the priest looks on. A golden light surrounds the man bathing in the pool.

All three mosaics depict a man cursed with a magical rotting disease being cured by the pool of Oshalla. It illustrates the method by which PCs can gain safe access to the shrine and cure Gristy of his own magical "curse."

If the PCs move up to explore the mosaics in detail, or if they attempt to sift through the heaps of rubble, they unearth the undead remains of a priest of Oshalla. When Krazen flooded the shrine, this priest attempted to escape through a secret exit underneath the temple (now buried under the rubble). However, the priest was pinned by a toppled pillar and later drowned in the flood that washed through the temple. As punishment for his cowardice, the priest continues to haunt the temple as a heucuva.

The heucuva waits until the PCs have uncovered most of the rubble or entered the alcove before rising from the debris. It still wears the tattered robes of the Oshallan priesthood. The holy symbol of Oshalla hangs about his skeletal neck. PCs making a successful Intelligence check recognize this as the medallion depicted on the mosaics.

Heucuva: INT semi- (4); AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 19; Dmg 1d6; SA disease; SD silver or magical weapons needed to hit; turned as wight; MR immune to mind-influencing spells; SZ M; ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/188; holy symbol of Oshalla (gold medallion worth 150 gp).

Curing Gristy

Once the PCs have the holy symbol of Oshalla, they can use the pool to turn Gristy back into his human form. Any PCs afflicted with the heucuva's rotting disease can likewise be cured.

Convincing Gristy to enter the shrine is a difficult task because he is unwilling to pass under the archway. Fortunately, Gristy takes the same route to the shrine almost every morning, so it is possible to ambush and capture him without killing him. Certain proficiencies such as set snares and animal lore can help in laying a trap, a certain spells (such as *animal friendship* and *charm person or mammal*) may prove effective if the tiger fails its saving throw. The DM should apply modifiers to these saves if the tiger is commanded to do something potentially risky (like leave its lair or walk under the arch).

Druids or characters with herbalism can make a proficiency check to locate a small patch of Mihalkan—a plant whose roots can induce sleep. There is enough of the plant to prepare 10 doses of Mihalkan sedative. The drug must be injected and takes effect 1d4 hours after injection if the victim fails his saving throw vs. poison. Sleep lasts for 1d4+4 hours.

Concluding the Adventure

If and when the PCs return Gristy to human form, he is very disoriented. Due to Krazen's spell tampering, it takes Gristy a full week to recuperate and realize what has happened. During this time, he can travel, eat and sleep but cannot participate in extended conversations or any activity that requires too much concentration. He remembers flashes of his experience as a tiger, but nothing more. When he recovers fully, he is very grateful to the PCs. Once reunited with his family, he offers each character 100 gp plus 500 gp worth of goods (armor, weapons, horses, supplies, and so forth). He may even fund an expedition to track down the evil wizard, Krazen.

The Shrine of Oshalla could also provide further adventures. The PCs can learn from Gristy that during his brief stay, he discovered underground rooms beneath the temple. Who knows what treasures might lie buried beneath the rubble? The rooms might be accessible but flooded with water, providing a difficult environmental challenge.

Concerning the shrine, PC priests who abuse the magic of Oshalla's pool will probably incur the wrath of their own deities who don't take kindly to their worshipers drawing power from other sources. Oshalla herself may consider it an affront and send one of her surviving worshipers to negate a few of the party's choice magic items (using a *wand of negation* provided by the goddess herself). Ω

COMING IN ISSUE #67

"Witches' Brew" by Steve Johnson. An AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure, levels 3–5.

"Falls Run" by James Wyatt. An AD&D *Masque of the Red Death* adventure, 1st-level characters.

"Training Ground" by Rick Maffei. An AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure, levels 5–8.

"Uzaglu of the Underdark" by Chris Perkins. An AD&D adventure, levels 5–10.

"The Little People" by Matthew G. Adkins. An AD&D SideTrek, levels 1–2.

"Al-Kandil" by John Baichtal. An AD&D AL-QADIM® SideTrek, levels 5–10.